骸骨騎士様、
只今異世界へお出掛け中
Emaki Hakawi
秤猿鬼
illust. KeG
I
Skeleton Knight, going out to the paralled universe
OVERLAP

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# *Prologue*

As the curtain of night fell, a girl ran through the forest with little concern for her footing. The trees were dyed a dark shade, as solid blackness shrouded the landscape.

However, there were sure signs that the men pursuing her were shortening the distance separating them.

Numerous twigs and leaves were tangled up in the shoulder-lengthed thin golden hair that was tinged with a hint of emerald. Looking into her moist bluish-green eyes, one could see the fear of the twelve year old girl. Her cheeks were stained with the yet-to-dry trails of tears.

Though the breathing of the running girl was rough, and the amount of wounds on her hands and feet from the trees and thickets only increased as she tried to avoid getting tangled in the forest, she still ran.

Thanks to the long pointed ears which was a characteristic of the forest people, the sounds of the pursuing group of men could be heard. However, the men could not be seen when she looked around. The girl was a member of the dark elf tribe, and carries her people's night vision ability; however, she did not know this forest's daytime layout, so it was impossible to tell where she was going.

The senses of the elf people were good, but the girl was still very young and lacked proper warrior training, so she didn't know how to handle this situation calmly.

The girl was desperate to escape, but her pursuers were steadily closing their encirclement net.

[Hyun]

A whistling sound was heard, and suddenly there was an arrow lodged in the girl's right leg. The girl, losing her footing, fell on the spot.

She looked at her right leg. A sharp pain rose up the moment she saw it.

"AAAAAH!!"

The girl held her leg in excruciating pain, large tears dropping on the ground as she writhed about.

The bushes swayed, revealing several human figures.

All the men were equipped with leather armor and thick long-sleeved tunics, wielding various

weapons. Some carried a sword with daggers at their waist, while others carried bows.

The men all had vulgar smiles on their faces, but they approached the girl without any carelessness, indicating some level of skill.

“Quickly attach the collar.”

A man with his hands on the weapon at his waist instructed the other men. One of the men approached the girl from behind with a metal black collar and a gag.

“After this safeguard. Hurry, before the elves find us. Will the restraints hold?”

Another man next to the leader nodded and then answered,

“Alright, the four that were captured will be taken to Diento.”

When the commander gave the signal to withdraw, the group disappeared from the dark forest.

# *Chapter 1「I'm in a Different World」*

By the time I noticed it, I realized I had no idea how I got here.

There was a sloping area covered in green grass. The sun was still high in the sky, so it might still be early afternoon. The wind blew through the grass, giving it the appearance of green water; a wave of grass flowed in my direction as I sat atop a large rock. The smell of moist soil and the grass mixed with the wind, and the fragrance drifted into my nostrils. The wind carried to the forest behind me, rustling the leaves on the trees.

I stand up unintentionally from the rock which I had sat on, and fix my eyes on the overwhelming expanse of the horizon. A view such as this couldn't easily be seen in little old Japan, could it?

Finally, I notice my own appearance.

Decorated with the finest of details, a silver full body armor toned with white and blue, akin to those from some myth or legend, adorned my body.

A jet-black mantle blows in the wind; inside the mantle, small glimmers of light can be seen, invoking thoughts of a starry night.

On my back I carry a large round shield with an elaborate emblem in the center, as well as what can only be described as a divine blade which gave off an awe-inspiring aura.

This gear is far apart from my normal appearance, but I know it well. Even today, before I fell asleep in front of my computer after playing online games, this gear was equipped to my player character.

"What the hell?!"

I yell at the top of my lungs. Even though I know there is no one here to answer, I couldn't help but cry out.

I slowly move the sword sheath to my waist and whip out the blade. A thin, blue, double-edged blade surrounded by light is drawn. The beautiful blade shines like the light of day. The length of the sword's blade exceeds well over a meter, giving the weapon a seemingly heavy look. I take a stance with the blade parallel to my eyes, and swing it down.

"What the hell?!"

I scream again.

It's light! The weight is such that I can hardly believe it's made of metal. I lightly swing the

unrealistic sword to confirm the weight. Then I swing the sword with one hand. Even though I'm equipped with body armor, I feel light. It's as if I'm not wearing armor at all.

"【Flying Dragon Slash】!!"

While waving the sword around, I call out the name of a skill from the game. A beam of light emits from the sword, and is sent flying into the forest.

Suddenly, a handful of trees slowly fall within the forest. The leaves of other trees rustle, and the of the birds of neighboring trees all fly into the sky. A slightly dull sound echoes through the area as the trees hit the ground.

"Really, what the hell…"

Finally, I have the feeling that my thoughts have calmed down. But I still did not understand the situation.

The weapons and equipment that I have equipped were of mythical grade, the same as that of my character in the game I was playing.

It was truly a rarity to be fully equipped with mythical grade gear. There are a total of six grades of equipment: low, intermediate, high, masterpiece, legendary, and mythical.

The silver body armor I have on is the Heavenly Knight armor,『Belen's Saint Armor』series. The armor is comprised of five pieces: the headgear, torso, waist, arms, and legs. Not only does it enhance defense and periodically restore a fixed amount of health, it also increases attack power, as well as increasing curse resistance. In addition, fire and light attribute damage are reduced by half. A set of truly broken gear.

And the mantle fluttering in the wind behind me is the mythical grade『Overcoat of the Night Sky』. It has the effect of reducing darkness attribute damage, also restoring a set amount of mana over time.

The shield that I carry on my back was the『Heavenly Shield of Titus』. In addition to high defense and knockdown invalidation, it raised all abnormal status effect resistance values.

Complaints about the broken Heavenly Knight series led to the administration patching it, but the effects of the armor remained – it was just that players could no longer use other accessories with the equipment. Consequently, the already limited number of users of the Heavenly Knight series further decreased.

Finally, in my hands I am wielding the『Holy Thunder Sword』.With its high attack power and agility boost, it's a two-handed sword I am truly proud of. Like every other mythical class weapon within the game, it has its own special attack, with the penalty being that the player suffers a power reduction after its useage.

I return the sword to the sheath at my waist, then, with my right hand, I cast【Flame】. And just like in the game, a torrent of flames shoot out as if my hand is a flamethrower.

*No… It's different from the game.*

If I'm not mistaken, the main occupation of my character was Heavenly Knight, and the subclass should have been Pope.【Flame】is a Magician's skill and【Flying Dragon Slash】is certainly a Warrior's skill. It's not a skill my current character's occupation should have been allowed to use in the game.

Why can a Knight use a Magician's skill? Then, I had a thought: *considering everything, what if this isn't the game or a dream, but reality?*

If it's reality, then the skills that I could not use because of my class change should be fully available. For example, a Judo expert who started a boxing career is still capable of using Judo techniques.

With me often reaching the highest level of my occupations, am I able to use all the high-level skills that I had?

The conditions for gaining the Heavenly Knight class are that a character had to possess maximum level in the Magician, Priest, and Warrior occupations. In order to achieve that, I had to gain the occupations of Magic Knight, Advanced Wizard, and Pope. I did not learn all of the skills from each occupation, but I did learn quite a few of them.

If anything, if I am able to use all of the skills that I learned, I should be able handle anything that comes my way.

I wonder if I would have been able to survive if my main occupation had been fixed to Heavenly Knight. Frankly speaking, some of the highest-level occupations can't really be used. First, there are only four technique skills available. And all of them are flashy skills that cause widespread destruction. Clearly it was a class only meant to fulfill the romance of the developers.

As it is, I am able to use the【Heavenly Knight Sword Techniques】that allows a two-handed sword be wielded with only one hand, but if I were to use both hands, wouldn't it increase my attack power?

I've been in this area for a while now, but nothing will get done if I stay here. If this is indeed real, I need to find some people or a town and think of a future plan.

I try to invoke the Magician's support skill,【Transfer Gate】. Pale light is emitted as a three meter wide magic circle appears…

In the game, all I had to do is select the name of a town and I would be transferred there. However there is no selection screen now. For a while, I think about what I should do.

Incidentally, my vision darkens. And then I notice that the landscape spread out before my eyes has changed.

I traveled about three meters from where I was a second ago. Apparently, this magic can't be used properly without a clear image of where I wanted to go.

However, I don't know any locations in this world, It seems that I didn't move because of this fact.

I give up…

Wait, there should be one more skill available for movement. The support skill,【Dimensional step】.

The skill lets me move to any location after I select it. In the early stages of the game, it was a skill that allows you escape the range of enemy attacks – a skill used when you were surrounded by enemies. But after the middle stage of the game, when the monsters and the boss' attack range took up the whole screen, it was regarded as a useless skill. Am I able to use it? With no screen to click, I could just be wasting mana.

I set my eyes on the intended location and activate【Dimensional step】. The scenery changes in an instant. When I look back, I observe that the place I had just been is a great distance away. It's probably about five hundred meters. In the game, no matter what you did, the skill could only take you to the edge of the screen. In reality, it appears that I can move to any location within my line-of-sight. Though I can't blow off heads with beams like a certain Esper girl, it's still a helpful power. With a cool-down time of one second, it can be seen as a very convenient movement method.

So I continually use【Dimensional step】to navigate the landscape.

As the day fades away, it seems that I'm moving in the southwest direction. After leaving the sloping area a little while ago, I see a large river ahead.

I transfer to the riverbank and look around. This river is about two hundred meters across. It seems to hold quite a lot of water. When I look at the river, the water seems to be transparent, and I see many fish swimming along with the current.

*Why don't I take a break and have a drink of water?*

I remove my helmet. That reminds me, not only did I not feel heavy wearing the armor, but I also didn't feel hot. Such a thought was in my head as I brought my face closer to the water.

At that moment, my mind goes blank—

"–Damn…"

My mutter is lost inside the noise of the water.

My vision focuses on the refection in the water. There are no eyes. In fact, there doesn't appear to be a nose or even any flesh. In the dark eye sockets, the pale light of the undead can be seen. I stare back at the reflection without any emotion.

The water was reflecting the figure of an armored skeleton—

I completely forgot it. The kind of avatar I played the game with.

Your usual game avatar would be a humanoid – one that can be customized to suit a person's own preference. The degree of customization was extensive: you could make a long-eared Elf, or even a pig-nosed Orc.

There were also special avatars that charged a fee in order to be obtained; one of the special avatars was『Skeletal Body』.

Despite the fee, "it won't matter if I'm completely covered in armor," is what I told my friends…

I actually wanted a golden skeleton avatar. With that, I would be known as the crazed hero of justice. When I searched about it later, the head of the guy was a skeleton, and from the neck down it was gold just like the costume of a professional wrestler. Nevertheless, I thought that it would be a completely golden skeleton for the entire time before that…

To escape reality, I had thought of the past.

This is very bad.

I can not remove my helmet in public with this appearance. In fact, if I do, I might become a target for monster subjugation.

My current future plans were just revoked.

I will live quietly and not stand out as best as I possibly can.

However, my body armor is quite luxurious, and it could attract attention alone… Yet, I can't remove this equipment.

In this world I have nothing to my name except for this armor. I lack all my in-game items, and I have no money.

I have to carefully scrape together some money for the time being.

I shove my head into the water and drink. Since I'm a skeleton, did I try to drink out of habit? Where would the water that I drink go? In the first place, can I even taste the water?

I won’t worry about the small things anymore. The inside of my head was beginning to overheat. Even though I have no brain to speak of.

A skeleton laughs in a high-pitched voice in my head… Oops, my mind tried to escape reality again.

First, let’s reconsider the idea of looking for a city. Perhaps I will find some people living at the end of the river.

With such thoughts, I put my helmet back on and resume using【Dimensional step】. Since leaving the river, signs of a road has started to develop, so a village shouldn’t be that far.

# *Chapter 2「A Surprise Attack Isn't Cowardly」Part 1*

「A Surprise Attack Isn't Cowardly」Part 1

We continued down a neglected highway with considerable speed. As the horse-backed guards escorting the carriage travelled alongside it, the sound of the horseshoes echoed. The carriage jolts from time to time as its wheels got caught on the roadside stones.

I quietly watched the rear of the carriage, gazing into the rear viewing window. On the right of the road was the riverbed, with the water's surface being lit by the fading sun, coloring the surroundings with the glow of dusk. A gently inclined hill was to the left, and a herd of animals could be seen moving along it. Straight ahead, small shrubs start to line the highway, and have begun to cast their shadows across the land.

Only sounds of the carriage wheels and the horses' hooves echoed through the area, with no abnormality found anywhere. However, the escorts seemed to have fallen into a heavy silence. It was due to the unexpected situation that the group encountered a while ago.

Lauren Ojou-sama, as the representative of the Rubierute household, had attended the ball held by the Diento household. As we made the return trip, a group of bandits ambushed our party. With more than twenty thieves appearing, nine of the guards broke formation to delay them as long as possible and prevent further pursuit.

Only five soldiers and a single knight remained with the carriage. And there were no signs of any of the previous guards catching up from behind.

Inside the carriage, watching the passing landscape through the window, Lauren Ojou-sama had an anxious expression. Her long chestnut color hair loosely sways, and appeared to have lost all of it usual luster due to the tension and anxiety. She had a small face and narrow eyelashes, with her light-brown eyes giving off a sort of transient feeling.

The sixteen year old girl also wore a luxurious light-blue dress, with the glow of the sunset which entered through the carriage's window giving it a crimson tinge.

Inside the carriage, the only other person was me, her maidservant. While usually it was a place for idle chitchat, now neither of us spoke a word.

After a while the speed of the carriage suddenly slowed, then the neighing of a horse was heard. The coachman's window opened, and he offered an apology.

"Sorry, Ojou-sama. The horses aren't able to last any longer, so you will have to walk from now on."

From the time when the bandits ambushed until now, the horses have been constantly pulling the carriage. It appears that they have finally reached their limits. As expected, it was a harsh task even for four horses. Well, if anything, it was the horse of the knight that suffered the most.

When I peered outside the window, I saw the middle-aged man tying up his horse next to the carriage. He was one of the knights under the service of the Rubierute household, Maudlin-sama. The remaining escorts gathered around him.

Maudlin-sama finished wiping the sweat off his horse's neck with a towel. His hair was short and tidy, and he sported a well-groomed mustache. Even though he was clad in light body armor, his stature revealed the toned muscle underneath.

"Maudlin-sama, did the bandits give up?"

From the window of the carriage, I asked while looking back at him.

"I was worried because the number of people sent against the bandits were so few, but since no one has come to pursue, perhaps it's already safe. Convey this, if you please, to Ojou-sama."

In response, Maudlin-sama showed me a reassuring toothy grin.

"Is that so? I can finally rest easy after hearing that."

I looked at the highway in front of the carriage.

The bushes that were concentrated along the highway further back were now dispersed along the road. The hillside that was visible from the highway was now within walking distance. As I looked at it, I couldn't help but feel an oppressive aura on the back of my neck. The prickling sensation made me furrow my brows.

After looking at me, Maudlin-sama also attentively watched the surrounding area. Just as we took notice of something, the sound of the air distorted as multiple arrows flew towards us.

"Goha–"

With a dull sound as they penetrated flesh, two arrows struck the coachman. At that moment, the wheels of the carriage struck a stone on the road, causing the body to bounce and be thrown off. The corpse of the coachman then blocked the wheels, preventing it from moving.

Furthermore, numerous arrows flew from the bushes, piercing two of the escorts.

"Shit! There was another ambush?! How could this be happening!!"

Suddening appearing from the top of the ridges next to the highway, with the ringing of hoofbeats, six bandits charged down towards the caravan. The arrows pinning down the escorts allowed the horse-backed bandits to approach uncontested. Two more guards were pierced by arrows, and another fell to the bandits in an instant. Just as Maudlin knight-sama knocked off one of the approaching bandits with his sword, two people emerged from the bushes to regain control of the rider-less horse.

"Rita-dono! The carriage!!"

At the voice of Maudlin-sama, I felt my head finally clear up. I scrambled off the carriage and kicked the body of the coachman out of the wheels' path. With the rear wheels now unblocked, the carriage could move again.

I tried to board the bloodstained coachman's seat, only to have my maid uniform grabbed from behind, forcing me onto the ground. My back struck the ground heavily, and all the air in my lungs were forced out. From the corner of my eyes, I saw one of the guards collapsing onto the ground.

The bandit who had pulled me down and was now dragging me entered my view. He had a vulgar smile on his face.

"GUAAAA!!!!"

At that time, a masculine voice full of pain sounded out. When I looked at the direction of the voice, an unbelievable scene unfolded before my eyes.

One of the guards behind Maudlin-sama had his sword slid in between one of the gaps of Maudlin-sama's armor. Maudlin-sama's face twisted intensely.

"Casuda!? So it was your guidance!!"

After being stabbed in the back, Maudlin-sama tried to twist his body to slash the former guard Casuda. However, his opponent who was similarly on a horse, with a faint smile, took the opportunity to push him onto the ground.

Suddenly, a bandit with a slightly better physique than the rest jumped off his horse and stabbed Maudlin-sama in the neck with his sword. Blood sprayed out, and the ground around Maudlin-sama was dyed red.

"Hey, kindly remove the Ojou-sama from inside the carriage."

The better-built bandit gave instruction to the others while revealing his yellow teeth. He had squarish features that are complemented by the tied-up long hair behind his back, with a messy beard that covered his jawline and made it impossible to see his neck. He carried a

single-edged sword with an arm that was covered in old scars. This man seemed to be the leader of these bandits.

Following his order, the other bandits dismounted from their horses and ran up to the carriage. The door of the carriage was flung open, and Lauren Ojou-sama was pulled outside.

“Noo! Release me at once!!”

Although Ojou-sama desperately struggled, twisting her body, her arms were bound by two of the men. I was grabbed in a similar fashion and dragged along.

“Hey! Take care when removing her clothes! We can sell them for a good price!” The bandit leader yelled at the two who held Ojou-sama.

“Boss, because I killed that guy, can I have a taste..?” One of the bandits who was taking off the clothes asked the leader.

“Moron!! I’m the first to stick it in!! You can have a turn when I’m done!!”

“J-just wait a minute! I was the informer so I should go first!!”

Casuda the former escort loudly protested to the boss of the bandits. The boss glared at back at him with dangerous eyes, and then casually shoved his sword through Casuda’s throat.

“Gayhu!?”

A weak cry was uttered by the traitor as a sword protruded from the back of his head. Casuda fell like a puppet with its strings cut, while the other bandits watched with nasty smiles on their faces.

“From the very beginning, I don’t share!”

As the boss said this, he kicked the head of the now dead man. With a dull sound the skull broke off, as the neck twisted towards the direction of the rising sun.

“Hii!”

Ojou-sama uttered a short scream upon seeing this. A yellow stain spread on her underwear, and a small puddle appeared beneath her.

“Augh, the girl pissed herself!”

At the bandit holding Ojou-sama crying out, the surrounding men began to laugh vulgarly.

“We can’t sell dirty underwear, toss ’em.”

At the boss’ words, the stained underwear was removed quickly. Ojou-sama’s wet chestnut bush was exposed to the obscene eyes of the men.

“Nooo!!! Let me go!!”

Desperate wanting to get away from the stares of the men, she flailed her feet in an attempt to get away. However, the boss made one of the bandits hold her feet down, while he removed his pants and exposed his dirty thing.

“Stop! Do you know what will happen if you do such a thing!!” I voiced my condemnation to the men.

“Before worrying about others, you should first worry about for yourself!”

As one of the men who held me said this, he carelessly teared open my simple maid attire. My bra was teared as well, and one of my breasts was exposed. I covered up it quickly, but was then roughly thrown onto the ground.

“I will make you feel good along with that Ojou-sama over there, hahaha!”

When the man laughed, a wave of rancid air hit my face. He then began to pull his pants down. Both of my arms were held down by one of the men, while one of my legs was caught by another one. As it was hanging above me, the boss was preparing to hit the very depths of Ojou-sama’s private place in one go.

At the moment – a large shadow appeared behind the bandits.

It was an event that occurred in an instant. A towering knight stood behind the bandit boss on top of Ojou-sama.

With an armor that shined with a brilliant silver with white and blue undertones and decorated with the finest details, he appeared as if he were a holy knight out of some fairy tale. The pitch-black mantle that fluttered behind him seemed to have been made from the starry night sky itself. The helmet’s visor concealed his face, and, as a result, his expressions and emotions were all hidden.

The sword raised in his right hand seems to extend without end, and pulsed with an overwhelming presence as it flickered with a mysterious indigo light.

The knight’s sword flashed in the direction of the boss and the bandits who held Ojou-sama’s feet down. The blade moved as if it could cut the air, and left a trail of light in its wake. The knight took a large sidestep, and with a reverse slash, the sword released another wave of light. The sword’s arc seemed to cover the sky itself as a line of light glimmered between the two men holding Ojou-sama’s wrists.

—All of which happened within a split second.

In the next moment, the torso of the boss slid off. The bandits who were holding the feet had nothing from the neck up, their heads rolling on the ground faced the direction of sunrise. The bandits in charge of the wrists had their heads split in half, the spraying blood magnificently covered a nearby thicket, dyeing the scenery already colored by the sunset even more red.

The boss's upper body landed near Ojou-sama, and in a half-frenzy she kicked it away. The remaining lower body released a white cloudy fluid from a certain thing that stood erect in the pool of blood.

For the man who had his dirty thing out while straddling my abdomen and the man who held me down, their brain finally realized that something abnormal was happening.

"Uwaaaah!!! M-monsteeer!!!"

The two men scrambled to get away, but the man who had his pants down tripped, and fell down close to me. Before I noticed, the tip of the knight's sword had already swung down, and the man collapsed on the ground like a frog that had been stepped on.

The silver knight pulled his sword from the skewered man, and turned towards the man still running. Slowly, with a single step, he swung his sword, once again sending out a white flash. By all accounts, he merely cut the air in front of him, while the man had run quite a distance. And yet, the upper and lower body of the fleeing man separated, collapsing onto the ground.

Until the bandits became lumps of flesh the knight did not speak; I simply sat there and blinked three times. With a light swing, the silver knight sheathed his sword. He then looked towards us, and a slightly muffled voice could be heard from the depths of the helmet that completely hid his expression.

"Are you alright?"

# *Chapter 3「A Surprise Attack Isn't Cowardly」Part 2*

The path along the riverbed did not feel like an actual road to me.

The earth was simply flattened on this strip of land, the only indication of traffic being the carriage wheel's tracks. I was following the river downstream using【Dimensional step】.

When I spotted a stopped carriage ahead of me.

I could finally encounter the inhabitants of this world, but something about the atmosphere was off.

To investigate, I transported to a nearby location, and observed the carriage. One large man appeared to be thrusting his sword toward a bodyguard. Lying on the ground, were the bodies of five other guards. The person parallel to the bandit fell to the ground, only the six bandits and two women were left alive. It was obvious in which direction, things were developing.

If I wanted to save the two women, I'd have to take care of the six bandits that could kill without hesitation. However, going out and simply yelling "Stop it, you guys" wasn't going to cut it.

If this were the game, then my current powerful equipment would allow me to be alright if I challenged them. However in reality, the outcome could bend to the will of chance.

There is only one strategy I can obtain certain victory with, I need to launch a surprise attack. It will all come down to how many I can remove within the initial action. However, the odds will be highly in my favor with this plan. After all I can always use【Dimensional step】if the attack fails. First, I should take down the strongest looking one.

In my direct sight, the man that had been targeted pulled his pants down exposing his dirty ass.

My sword whipped out from its sheath, the mythical grade weapon【Holy Thunder sword】was ready to released a little of the power capable of cutting down trees with one stroke. All right, I'm all set.

At once, I was behind the bandits with the use of transfer magic.

—When asking the result, the surprise attack was a great success. Rather, it was overwhelming victory.

Before they could even react, four people were rendered incapable of action. And the two that tried to run were quickly dealt with.

In the first place, I had no intention of letting a single bandit escape. It was like my state of being had entered a battle mode, when I saw the people trying to run my body moved instantly. Showing your back to a predator is something you should never do, when trying to running away from them. That is surely why I used【Flying Dragon slash】to deliver the fatal blow……

Although it was to save the women, I felt nothing at the thought that I had killed. I wonder if this is a mental effect?

I begin to look around, as I'm hit with a immeasurable feeling that something important is missing.

—Well, even if I think about it now, it is unlikely that I would find the answer……

Moreover, since the threat of the bandits has been dealt with, I could probably get these women to lead me to the nearest town.

As for two women, I was having a little trouble of finding where I should be looking, I try to relieve their tension by speaking.

"Are you alright?"

I call out to the two women, speaking in a normal tone, as if we were normal traveler.

The tone was suitable to use whenever I play the game.

It was the basic manner of playing, although I usually had to type on a keyboard before I could speak. Even if we weren't role-playing, most people would act as such, at least…… I think they would.

By the way, my character setting here were as a warrior, and I have the qualifications of a holy knight. A curse has changed me into a skeleton, so I wander looking for a way to break it. I'm a nice warrior in my early 40s…… those were the setting I prepared of asked.

One of the two women was still a girl, and had chestnut colored hair. She sat there stunned, cover in the blood of the bandits. Indeed, it was kinda sad……

The other women was 20-something and wore the remains of a maid outfit. She wore her red curly hair in a short style, and was looking at me with strong brown eyes. Her clothes were heavily damaged around her chest as she was trying to cover her breast with her arms. Not much of the victim's blood seems to have hit her.

"You should wash your bodies some in the river. I will take care of clean up while you do so.

"Y-Yes, Thank you very much. I will move ojou-sama over there."

At my words the redhead maid, ran to the carriage and pulled out a piece of luggage, she then wrapped the girl, referred to as ojou-sama, in a cloth and took her to the riverbed.

Then, I look around again.

There were 6 bandit bodies, and 7 bodyguard bodies in total. A terrible scene. It was like looking at a dreadful crash scene from a foreign TV drama. There were also 12 horse, not counting the ones attached to the carriage. Based on the saddles and other gear on the horses, 6 of them seemed to have belonged to the bandits.

A horse in such a time should be quite expensive. It would be equivalent to a modern car. Selling the six that belonged to the bandits should cover my traveling expenses. Can I also receive money from selling the weapons of the dead as well? The weapons should also be quite valuable, as they are basically lumps a metal.

I decide to discard the leather armor that won't seem to sell for much, in addition most of them are covered in blood.

I search the body of one of the bandits for the time being. Something like a leather pouch is tied to his waist. I remove the drawstring to verify the contents, 4 sheets of silver about the size of a 100-yen coin, and 15 sheets of various colors about the size of a 10-yen coin. A similar crest is drawn on all of them.

This seems to be the money used here. Silver and copper coins? Comparing it to the coins you see in Japan, they left me speechless. So this is the so called taste of wealth.

After a while, I'm sure that I've taken most of the valuables of the bandits.

The bottom half of the boss guy that was floating in soup, had 6 gold sheets in it about the size of a 1-yen coin. They were probably gold coins, although small they were comparatively heavy.

From all the bandits I got, 6 gold, 31 silver, and 67 copper. Perhaps this is a small amount, but I can't tell without knowing the price of anything.

There were 6 swords, 1 mace-like weapon, and 3 daggers.

The weapons were gathered up in a sack I found on one of the bandits' horses.

The corpses of the bandits were piled on the side of the road. Have I grow use to this kind of scene from those foreign dramas? I ponder as I notice my indifference to my actions.

I cast【Flame】on the pile of corpses. From my flame-thrower like hand, a jet of fire engulfs the pile of bandit corpses.

When they are reduced to ashes, they can be useful to the plants as fertilizer.

Suddenly I see, a copper had fallen near the flames.

I pick it up and throw it into fire, I don't know if the ferries of the Styx river are here or not, but at least one of them should be able to cross the river now.

As I watched as the fire and smoke were carried upward, the two ladies returned.

The brown-haired ojou-sama immediately went inside to carriage, however her complexion seems to have improved. The maid pulled out a leather bag tied to the rear of the carriage and took some spare cloths from it,

“With the bodies of the bandits cremated, do you want to do the escorts next?”

I ask her about the treatment of other corpses. She stopped for a bit, and thought about it.

“The bodies will be claimed later on by other soldiers. Only the weapons and horses will be brought back, thank you for preparing them.” She replied, bowing politely.

“Understood.”

I return a short reply, and began to move the bodies.

The maid boards the carriage with her change of clothes, and pulled the curtains.

Finding another sack, I throw the weapons of guards in it, and placed it on the rear of the carriage.

I then hitch the guards’ horses to the carriage, with some rope I found in the bandits’ belongings.

As for the bandits’ horse, five of them are tied to the strongest looking one. Now it should be difficult for them to run, and I can bring the horses into the city by pulling the rope.

The horse I rode looked slightly annoyed by the weight of the body armor…

After awhile the maid appeared wearing her new clothes.

“This time you rescued us from a dangerous situation, we are truly grateful.”

The maid gently crosses her arms, and bowed deeply.

“I was resting nearby by chance. Accompany me to the next town and we will be even.”

I feel a little guilty brow betting her like that, but the journey to town has now interwoven our destinations.

“Thank you very much!”

The maid, without noticing my ploy, had a joyous expression, as she thanked me again and boarded the driver’s seat of the carriage.

When the carriage begins to move quietly, I had my own horse move at the side of it. The other horses were pulled by the rope, and followed shortly behind.

# *Chapter 4「The First Town Rubierute」Part 1*

"I know this is a late introduction, but my name is Rita Farren. I am the maid of Lauren Roberts, daughter of the Rubierute noble household."

While driving the carriage, Rita nods her head a little before speaking to me. Her brown eyes become fixed onto me. Apparently, she was waiting on some kind of self-introduction.

"Hmm, I am a traveling wanderer. You can call me Arc."

I introduced myself roughly and returned to watching the road. Of course the name was that of my game character. In this body, I feel that using the identify of my character is the most suitable course of action.

But still, to think that the girl in the carriage was actually a noble. Although I had planed to not stand out too much, it appears that the plan is on the verge of collapsing. I have to make adjustments quickly, lest I get caught up in more troublesome things.

"Arc-sama, is your destination perhaps Rhoden?"

Rhoden? Is Rhoden a region? Or is it a country? I have no idea what it is.

It was a name that was never brought up in the game.

"No, as a traveler I merely wander around. So something like a destination…… would prevent me from going very far."

While saying a suitable response, I stare at the dusk stained hills, in hopes of invoking a relaxed atmosphere.

"Is that so? We are heading towards the town of Rubierute, which Lauren ojou-sama's father rules. Buckle-sama well be pleased with the subjugation of the bandits, so would you kindly stay with us until we reach the mansion.

Your deception of a worried father was brilliant, you even managed to pull out a warm and inviting smile.

However, I will absolutely refuse that invitation. It would be nothing but a hassle to meet with a feudal lord.

In the first place, my helmet can't come off. I can't greet an aristocrat while wearing this helmet. Even in modern times, you couldn't get away with meeting a governor wearing a full face mask. In fact, in my world you couldn't even talk with convenience store clerk with a mask on.

I have to use all of my energy to avoid this meeting.

“I appreciate the offer, but gratification is not what I was after. Your feelings are more then enough.”

“Receiving nothing, for saving both ojou-sama and myself…… Buckle-sama would be displeased with that……”

She said so persistently. I was at a loss. Her expression said she would not relent unless I accepted a gift of some kind. I need to come up with something I desired. But was there anything good I could ask for……

“Very well, as a traveler, I would be very thankful for something to make my passing easier.”

“Traveling……, ah, you can take this if you like. Only nobles can use the silver passports, so I only have a copper one. Showing this within the territory, should smoothen out any problems you have while traveling.”

From a breast pocket she pulled out a sheet of copper a little smaller then a business card. She then stretched out her arm to hand it to me, who was on horse back.

Receiving it, I noticed a family crest in the middle that had some type of characters inscribed around it.

“Thank you very much.”

I thanked her for it, before putting it away with the other goods piled in my pouch. While doing so she spook up.

“Arc-sama, I can see Rubierute.”

When I look in the direction of her voice, the appearance of a city was seen in the distance.

Water from the river flows around the city’s borders, by being channeled through a large moat.

Was the width of the moat around 3 meters?

A Wheat field stretches beyond one section of the moat, and a small wave of wheat occurs when the wind blows. The field was also protected by a small moat of its own.

The city walls seem to be made from reliable stone, with a height of maybe 5 meters? If you compared them to a castle’s walls it might look unreliable, but for a city the walls were quite sturdy.

I wondered if it was normal to find a town this big in such a medieval era?

The city gate seems to be 5 meters in width, and had watchtowers built in to both sides. There are a few guards at the base of the towers, standing guard and looking around. In front of the gate stood a stone bridge, but it was not the same as the drawbridges I saw often in the game.

Kl～ing, Kl～ing.

From the center of the town an evening bell rings, echoing trough the area until it reaches here.

“Arc-sama, that was the gate closing bell. We’ll have to hurry a little.”

Though the gate closing bell sounded, the gate would not close immediately. Before the gate closed we had to get the carriage close to the gate. Though since it is the carriage of the feudal lord, they could open the gate again, even if it is difficult work for the guards.

We seem to be at the city’s east gate. I then noticed that all the guards were standing around carrying spears.

One of the guards noticed the face Rita, and started running in our direction.

“Rita-dono! Who is this?! What happened to the escort troops and Sir Maudlin!?”

One by one the guard fired off questions. The guard that ran up may be the captain because he was the only one that wore a helmet.

“On the highway we encountered a bandit ambush, an hour ago. Sadly, Maudlin-sama and the other escorts fell to the hand of the bandits. Arc-sama appeared and managed to kill the remaining bandits.

“What!?”

The guard captain looked between Rita and myself with an astonished expression. Upon hearing the story, the other guards all became noisy.

“We preserved Maudlin-sama’s and five other escort’s bodies, I ask that you go to retrieve them. I will take ojou-sama to the mansion, and report back to Buckle-sama.”

“Yes! I will prepare a body collection unit immediately. We ask that you gain Buckle-sama’s permission to act.”

After giving a salute , the captain starts to run around giving out orders.

After she saw that, she stepped down from the driver’s seat and bowed to me again.

“Arc-sama, thank you again for this time and before. If there is anything you ever need, please visit the feudal lord’s mansion and ask for ojou-sama’s personal maid, Rita Farren. I promise that I will help as much as I’m able to.”

“Understood. You wouldn’t happen to know where I could sell these horses for a good price would you?”

I say so pointing to the line up of horses taken for the bandits. Keeping the six of them is out of the question. I want to sell them , but I’m not sure where to sell them.

“If it is horse-trading, there is a place named Danto’s stable close to the east gate. I think you will be taken care of immediately if you say I referred you”

“I see, well take care then.”

Entering from the east gate, she lead the carriage on the left path, while I take the right path that was pointed out to me.

The place I wound up at was a wooden building with a stable on the side. The signboard, that had a picture of a horse carved into it, was on display. After tying the horses to a post nearby, I entered the stable that had one man taking care of a horse inside. The man was not tall, probably only 160 centimeters, and had a sturdy figure. He was also bold and had a beard that grow to his chest.

“Excuse my, I was reffed to this place by Rita of the Robert’s estate. I want to sell a few horses.”

When I told the man what I wanted he looked surprised for a bit, but after a quick head to toe inspection he had a smile on his face.

“Is that so. I am the owner of the this stable. Have you a letter of introduction, Danne-sama?”

“No, I don’t have an introduction letter but I was told by Rita that I could sell horses here. I can’t afford the time to let the other party write up an introduction letter.”

The Stable master had a questioning look, trying to discover the meaning of my words. I don’t know if I misspoke, but this is a place that someone in service to the feudal lord recommend. Because of that connection, trust should be possible.

“The Robert house’s ojou-sama was attacked by bandits. I lent a hand in their subjugation. The 6 six bandit horses were the spoils of war. You see?”

“What! Lauren-sama!? Attacked by bandits who used 6 horse…… this uncle hasn’t heard anything like that…… Anyway, lets take a look at those horses.”

Danto followed me outside while stroking his beard, to look at the horse I had tied up. He takes a lamp from the front desk and looks over each horse one at a time.

“I will pay 45 suk for this one here, 30 suk for the others, and 1 sok for all of the saddles.”

I didn’t understand the units or the know the prices, but that should be enough to cover traveling. I nod at the amount offer, thankful that this full body armor hides my inner thoughts.

“Thank you very much. Because we have to pay it in gold, it may take a while. Hey, boys! Put the horses inside!”

After he bowed, he yelled to the back of the stable. Two boys rushed out of the stable and took the horses back with them.

After waiting a while, the manager appeared again with a large bag. We take the bag over to a table so I could confirm the contents. 10 pieces of the the gold 1-yen size coins were piled up. Suk appears to be the unit of the gold coins. There were 19 gold stacks and 6 silver stacks in total.

“196 suk in all, you can check for yourself.”

I counted the approximate number, and drop a few coins on the table to see if they fall at the same rate. There seems to be no problems in particular.

I put them in the leather pouch I already had. I feel that it has become a good weight. Although the gold coins are small, they weight is equip to a 500-yen coin. Though I feel that it is not pure gold, the money is still heavy.

“Thanks for your help. By the way do you know were I could find an inn?”

“An inn is it? There is Mara’s place on the main rode near the center of town… Does Sir not already have an inn suited for you to stay at?”

“I am a traveler, if it is a place I can lay my head it is enough.”

I thank the manager of the stable and start walking towards the center of town. Night has completely fallen and the area is shrouded in darkness. Occasionally, I would see people hurrying along, but the numbers dwindled as time pasted. However, each time I pasted someone they were startled. It couldn’t be help, a man in full body armor walking around at night was scary.

I found a busy street around 10 meters from the central part of the city. In the city of Rubierute, only the east an west sides seem to have a gate. However, the streets of the southern sections don’t seen to connect to the main road.

Two-story wooden buildings stand in line on both sides of the street, and several shops were giving off light. The place with barrel on it’s signboard is probably a bar, as I can hear the hustle and bustle of the people inside.

I tried to call out to a dizzy man that was outside the bar.

“Hey, I’m looking for Mara’s place. You know where it is?”

” Mr. S-Shiny Knight, I-It itz the building over there!”

Slurring his worlds, the pointed to a building across the street. I thank the man then enter the building to the sound of a doorbell ringing. The sound caused a middle aged man to appear behind the counter. The man opens his eyes wide when he saw me and rushed my way.

“Well well well, a knight is here! What kind of business brings you to this dinky little inn?”

“Um, I’m here to rent a room for the night.”

“Eh!? A-A guest? At my inn?!”

The innkeeper was surely surprised, as his voice became higher with each moment. Well my the outward appearance is a knight after all. When I showed affirmation, the innkeeper timidly handed me the room key.

The charge for the night was one silver piece. Firewood and cooking would cost 1 sek(the silver coin) apiece. You were charge with setting the fire and cooking your own meals, truly a cheap inn. In Japan the meal was included with the nights stay, the concept of a separate charge was from the west.

I go up the stairs at the side of the counter to the second floor. When I enter the assigned room, there was only a small wooden window, and the bed that had a thin cover on it. I place the lamp I received on the edge of the window, as I sit down and take a breather.

Physically I am perfectly fine, but I am mentally fatigued from this day.

I haven’t eaten anything all day, but I didn’t feel hungry. I really do not understand how this body works. It might even be possible that I don’t need to sleep, but let’s give it a try anyways.

Since this inn doesn’t have any security, I better not take off my armor. It would be bad if I was attacked in my sleep.

I turned off the lamp, and set in the bed with my back to the wall. I close my eyes and folded my arms.

Do my eyes even close? While questioning such a thing alone, the night kept advancing on.

# *Chapter 5「The First Town Rubierute」Part 2*

After parting with Arc-sama near the east gate, I drive the carriage to the feudal lord's mansion in the center of town. The people coming and going became sparse as the night dragged on.

Finally, the gates to the mansion came into view. Surrounded by 4 meter tall stone wall, the gate was made of wood and reinforced with iron. There were also three guards that maintained vigilance in the area.

Upon seeing the family's crest on the carriage, a guard gave the order to open the gate. When the gate open, the carriage enters the garden in front of the mansion. I can realize that guards on watch are upset. After all, the feudal lord's carriage is returning without any of the escorts. The 6 horse tied to the carriage, can only indicate a tragedy has occurred.

The news of our arrival must have reached here already, because the head butler of the Robert family was waiting for us in front of the mansion.

"Rita Farren. What on earth is this!?"

The head butler had thin white hair and a well groomed mustache. Without his usually gentle demeanor, he demanded a explanation from me. When I was going to answer such a question, the door of the carriage is opened with great force. Lauren ojou-sama jumped out the carriage and rushed into the mansion.

The action left a surprised expression on the face of the servants in her wake.

"We had encountered an ambush. Ojou-sama and I are the only ones that escaped. Maudlin-sama and the other escorts fell in battle. I need to report this to the master right a way. "

The head butler was blue in the face, while the other servants were at a loss for world. However the head butler was quick to recover and started to give out orders.

"Rita report this matter to the lord! He should be in the usual work room! You lot, go check on ojou-sama's condition! I will tell Bosco-sama about this!"

Said the past middle-aged butler as he ran to the detached residence on the property.

As I entered the mansion, I walked up the central stairs to the second floor, then travel down the connecting corridor. At the end of the western corridor, I stand before a splendidly decorated ornate door. I knock on the door gently, to which the lord gave permission to enter.

I quietly entered. A desk is centered in a room covered in bookshelves, and magical lamps are used to keep the room bright. The master of the mansion sat behind the desk, while in the midst of working on some kind of memo.

The thin oiled-backed hair, mustache, and round face gave the master a soft impression. However when one locked eyes with him, they would see the sharp glaze of a noble. I watch the moving quill and worry. That is because, reporting the results of the journey is not my normal responsibility.

“Rita, you’re just returned with Lauren from Diento? Did something happen?”

I answer the same way I did when the head butler questioned me.

“What!? Lauren?! Is Lauren safe!!?”

As soon as he hears my report, the master jumped up to confirm the safety of his daughter. He simply could not remain calm knowing that his daughter was attacked.
A man in the prime of his life then entered the room. He had a slim body, and was about 180 cm tall. His features were a mixture of grey hair, long sideburns, and deep wrinkles on his forehead. Although in his 50s, his could still pass for a man in his early 40s. It was Bosco-sama, the directeor of the Robert house’s security.

“I heard the story from the head butler. The carriage was attacked by bandits……, to attack the carriage of a viscount family, what outrageous scoundrels. Earlier, I went to confirm Lauren-sama’s condition, but she refused to leave her room.”

Bosco-sama’s already deep wrinkles deepen farther in, as he holds his forehead and says,

“Let’s hear the exact details of the ambush.”

Hearing that Bosco-sama confirmed ojou-sama’s well-being, I regained a little composure and recount the events in great detail.

“So, after the the first attack you retreated at a top speeds. Nine of the escort stayed behind to confront the 20 bandits, leaving only Maudlin-sama and 5 others with your group, and once the horses stopped to recover you were attacked by a secondary force of bandits.”

“What!? There were 2 ambushes!? Then were Maudlin and the others defected by the second group of bandits? That is quite the considerable tale.”

While standing with his arms crossed, Bosco-sama asked me every detail of the ambush. I told him everything that I could remember from the incident.

“To think that one of the guard was involved with them……! Bosco do a background check on that Casuda, immediately. If he has any relatives bring them in at once!”

“Yes, right away.”

After Basco-sama’s reply, he left the work room. Buckle-sama returned to his desk and sat deeply in his chair.

“A group of bandits that owned six horses……, I haven’t heard of that before.”

It was beyond expectations, when one considered the maintenance and management fees. In addition to food and water, there would also be a need for saddles and horseshoes. It would be rather difficult for a small bandit group to maintain six of them. Only one of the rumored large-scaled groups could manage that.

“It seems that the purpose of the bandits was to take Lauren ojou-sama. It is possible that they were hired……”

“What? ……could it have been the second prince’s faction trying to cause disarray!?”

Buckle-sama’s face was warped in surprise and anger

Within the kingdom of Rhoden, noble factions are increasingly competing over who the next king will be, due to the current king’s old age. The first prince born of the second queen, the second prince born of the first queen, and the the third princess born of the first queen. These three factions have turned the royal castle of the capital into a war-zone. In my life, politics were nothing but idle talk, but to think that here at the northern border, the influence of the strife could be felt.

“Speaking of the second ambush, you say that the knight that appeared did not demand anything?

“Yes, because he saved ojou-sama, I told him that you would be willing to reward him ……, however he only took my copper passport and asked for nothing else…… Was that wrong?”

“If the person said he didn’t need anything then it is alright. Rather, I could breathe a sigh of relief because it doesn’t seem like his involved with the second prince faction. Anyway, I need to send out the order to retrieve Maudlin’s and the other bodies. You are dismissed.”

After bowing at those words, I leave the room.

To me, Arc-sama didn’t seem to be apart of any faction. That person carried himself like any traveler would. However, his body armor was something that even the Lebrun empire’s household knights could only dream of possessing, and his godlike swordsmanship could be counted as a military threat on its own.

In the end, I could not see his real face. Should we meet again I wonder if I would be able to see it? The fear that I carried all day suddenly disappears. On my way to ojou-sama’s room, my footsteps became lighter.

Oops, I shouldn’t be in such high spirits. I need to focus on having ojou-sama regain her smile.

I continued on to ojou-sama’s room at a quick pace.

# *Chapter 6「Seeking Employment as an Adventurer」Part 1*

The next day, sunlight entered the room through the wooden window.
I stretch my body, that had gone stiff from sitting on the bed with my back against the wall. Although I didn't have any muscles with this body, it was a ingrained habit. Realizing this, I cracked my neck and stood up.

Daylight fills the room when I open the window. The window faced the main street, so I could already see activity in the streets by looking out.

Something like an open market was open, I could see people selling vegetables and grilled meat, as will as merchants selling art and jewelry. It was no surprise that there was a large turnout of visitors that went about.

After I verify the contents of my luggage and insured that I still had the right amount of money left, I left the inn. Nobody was at the counter, and other guest were leaving as they pleased. It seems that paying in advance was the norm here. What a sloppy business model.

I enter the main street carrying the weapon sack over my shoulder. The people on the street gaze at me in unison, making me feel uncomfortable. I wonder if this type of body armor is still unusual in this world?

Trying to let it go, I set a weapons shop as my first stop.

Heading west from the main road, I saw a signboard cover with a sword & axe over one of the shops. Entering, I see that the shop was crammed with weapons and protective gear.
From the back, a middle age balding man appeared. The man had a surprised look on his face, before he began speaking.

"Danne-sama, what can I do for you?"

"I want to sell these. How much?"

I took out the weapons from my sack and placed them on the counter one by one. All of them except one of the daggers because it might be useful in the future.

The owner of the shop picks them up one at a time, so that his can check the condition of each weapon. He places his hand on his jaw while determining a price, before he looks my way again.

"15 suk for the curved sword, 5 for each straight sword, 7 for the mace, and 1 suk and 5 sek for the daggers. The curved sword is sell-able if I polish the blade, but the other swords have damaged cores and need to be repaired. There is little damage on the mace, so I can just sell it as is.

“I don’t mind.”

“Alright that comes to 50 suk and 5 sek.”

He went to the back and pulled out 50 gold coins and 5 silvers coins. I put them in my leather pouch and placed it on my waist.

With the sell of the weapons and horses, I’ve come into quite a bit of money. The inn I stayed in is priced at 1 sek a night, since 10 silvers equals 1 gold one , I could stay there for over a week with just one gold coin.

However, I don’t know when money would be necessary in this world. I had to find a way to secure funds in case of emergencies……

When the owner of the shop returned after putting the weapons away, I asked him,

“Excuse me, you wouldn’t know were a wanderer could earn a steady income would you?”

“A steady income? With such excellent equipment, isn’t Sir already employed as a adventurer? Adventures usually don’t have to pay the toll for leaving and entering cities,”

It seems that there in normally a toll for entering and leaving cities. Since I entered Rubierute with the feudal lord’s carriage, I didn’t realize that there was one.

Adventurers simply have to show their certification to the gate guards and they would be let right in. Since the the duties of adventurers frequently take them in and out of the city they were excused from the toll. Members of the merchant association seem to have a similar setup, however a price can be charged depending on the amount and types of goods they bring in.

I thank the weapon shop owner and then leave. The adventurers guild was right across the street for the weapon shop. Next to that was merchant association’s building.

The building of the adventures guild was two-stories high, and the wasn’t anything outstanding about it besides the sword & shield signboard. When I open the double-doors, I notice a counter across from the entrance. The strange thing was that it was surrounded in an iron cage, give the whole area a zoo exhibit-like appearance.

One bear sat in the cage. Wait, that’s the body of a man not a bear. He had a stubby beard and short raven-black hair,the area around his left eyes had large scars through it, his muscular arms appeared ready to burst, and his exposed chest was covered in hair.

Were the social advancement of women delayed in this world? Looking around, I only saw stuffy men in this hellhole.

I slowly approached the bear-like receptionist. The one-eyed bear glared at me, as if I was his opponent.

“I would like to join the adventurers guild.”

Across the cage, the expression of the one-eyed bear twisted, when I stated my purpose. The end result of that distortion was an eerie smile, that was clearly never used much…… It gave a whole other meaning to the term “priceless smile”.

“Lookin at you equipment, it doesn’t seem like you have money troubles. The acceptance into the adventures guild includes a background check. As well as a test of strength. If you can hunt down a beast, monster, or bandit bring the proof here to conform it. Easy right?”

You say that a beast is good, but there are still things like monsters.

Coming here I saw flocks of animals in the hilly area, but I don’t think I past any monsters or if I did I didn’t notice them. I thought back to the idyllic scenery.

Anyway, one of the targets for subjugation was bandits? Would a freshly severed head count as proof then…… However the bandits I caught yesterday were already cremated, so I can’t use those.

“I understood. A few beast , coming up”

Leaving the adventurers guild building, I make my way towards the west gate.

In the middle of the city, there were a verity of places that were selling leather goods. Things like leather coin purses and leather handbags were all around. I pick up an item while on passing though one of the shops. It was a traveler sized gourd, with a small cork attached to the top of it. The gourd seemed like it could carry as much water as a lager bottle. A necessary item for any traveler.

“How much is this?”

“Master, how about 1 suk?”

The merchant laughs, while telling me the 1 gold price. One gold seems rather high, for what was is essentially a water bottle. The atmosphere seem to suggest that they overcharge me based on how I look. I should break this atmosphere with with little threat.

“One suk……huh?!”

“Wait! master. That was a little joke! How is 2 sek and 5 sok? Hihihi……”

The price immediately fell to 2 silver and 5 copper coins. It was 1/4 the original price. It’s possible the the price was still high, but since it was cheaper than before I bought it. I hand over 3 silver coins, and receive five coppers as change. It was hard to find silver coins, since my pouch was full of gold. Perhaps I should buy two more and separate the coins by type.

Besides the gourd I also bought large sack to place the game I hunted in. I paid with 10 copper coins to lighten my wallet a little.

Incidentally, I bought a grilled rabbit from a shop selling food. One rabbit cost two copper pieces, and was wrapped in a leaf-like parchment to take on the go.

Detouring through the private housing section on my way out of town, I spot a small open space before the west gate. A stone aqueduct was built along the path. It seemed to provide drinking water, as I saw merchants filling their gourds and wives from near by houses fill large jars with water. Farther downstream there were women washing vegetables and even farther down people were doing laundry. I had a feeling that the east gate also had such a aqueduct, but I was unaware of them because of how late I came into town.

The crowd calmly divided when I approached the aqueduct, It was like Moses had appeared, but it could of been chalked up to this people instinctively avoiding potential danger.

I fill my gourd with water before corking it. It should have been about 1 or 2 liters? I then place it in my sack before heading to the gate.

There seemed to be a baggage check at the gate, as even my belongings had to be looked through before I could leave. Around the merchants in line, were what appeared to be bodyguards. Probably due to the exiting tax , there were not a lot of people in my line out the city.

When I finally reach the gate, I'm stopped by a gate guard.

"Halt! It is three sek to leave out this gate.

In response to that, I take out the passport I got from Rita yesterday. The gate guards see it, and they displeases me by having it change hand in order to see if it was real. It might have been better if I spoke up.

When I leave the gate and cross the stone bridge, I stop and take in the view of whole area. In the fields there were people tending to the crops. On each of the farmers necks there was a wooden tag the probably acted as a passport.

While walking away, I think of a trivial thing like that as the city gets farther and farther away.

I don't use【Dimensional step】right away because I don't want to stand out more then I already do. I'm having enough trouble with my appearances alone.

Up till now, I have yet to see anybody use magic. If magic isn't common in this world, then I could be treated as a witch or monster and be burned at the stack. Even if it does exist, it is doubtful that space and time manipulation would be common. If it were common then what would be the point of horses.

So for now, I will move on foot.

As the highway goes up a gentle slope, the beauty of the whole scenery can be witnessed. To the left was the large river that bent greatly in the southwest direction. Down the hill the

road divides into two, one path traveling along the river, while the other one trailed off in the northwest direction. The fields don't spread out beyond this hill. and there are no longer any people on the road. Without any witnesses I can start using【Dimensional step】to cover the distance.

I decide to take the northwest path. Since I have no map and don't know any identifiable landmarks, it wouldn't be strange if I got lost straying to far from the highway.

【Dimensional step】was convenient when I had a large clear field of vision. Even the distance of 1 kilometer can be taken lightly. The only downside was that I could be easily spotted in clear open fields. Things will get troublesome if I'm careless.

While traveling down the northwestern path, I see a wooded area on the side of the road. There should be beast to hunt as game there.

I materialized at the edge of the forest, and started my trek through them. If there was a dangerous monster here, then I could always escape.

In the forest, I set about finding some game. The distance I could cover was shorter in the forest then in the plains. My armor was more noticeable as well. A camouflaged hunter, I did not make.

As the forest gives way to a stream, I ended up finding a pair of wild boar. Their length was a little over 1 meter, they had statuesque bodies covered in grey hair, and their two tusk covered in a arc-like manner.

It appeared that the two of them were relaxing near this stream. I stand between the gap of two trees, and grip onto my sword. A pale blue light appears, as the sound of metal against sheath is heard.

When the boars try to dash away, I use【Dimensional step】to appear ahead of them. When I had finished materializing, I was already in the middle of the swing that cut off the hind legs of the lead boar. I followed that up by transporting again, so that the second boar's hind legs were sent flying.

The boars just lay sideways on the ground, letting out scream-like cries. Moving quickly I stab the two in the gut with my sword. Blood spills out from the guts and leg stems, yet to two continue to cry out.

The water is dyed red, as it carries the boars' blood downstream.

Since the wild boar should be edible, bringing them home should result in some extra income. I once heard that it was best to avoid the instant kill in cases like this because the blood would be left inside the body otherwise and stink up the meat. By letting the heart push out the blood, there would be no odor left in the meat.

I thought it was quite a cruel thing to do in order to eat good meat, as the crying of the boars became feeble.

Then I remembered the spiced grilled rabbit that I bought this morning. Perched on the rocky shores of the swamp, I take off my helmet. The wind blows causing the trees rustle through the forest, while the quiet sound of moving water flows though the area. After stretching a bit and breathed in a breath of fresh air, I pull the grilled rabbit out of my sack.

“Itadakimasu”

After putting my hands together, I unwrap the rabbit from the parcel, and bite into it. The aroma of the herbs is enticing, and the the meat is deliciously salted to perfection. In no time the meat was all gone. I brought out the drinking water I got this morning, and took a swing of water.

It seemed that I could eat and taste as usual, even with this strange body.

“Thanks for the meal”

Finished with my meal, I wash my hand in the water of the stream and sit down again.

It was break to rest myself.

---

I think his ability to eat and sleep are like the world administrators from EGA. He doesn’t need to eat or sleep but can if he wants to.

# *Chapter 7「Seeking Employment as an Adventurer」Part 2*

Although this was a different world, it lacked the feeling of fantasy. Frankly speaking, it only gave off the vibe of a world in the Medieval era . There were no floating continents, elves , or even basic monsters such as goblins. I heard that there were monsters, but they were most likely just larger versions of normal animals.

Currently, the most fantasy-like element here was me. Despite being a skeleton, I could eat, walk, talk, and even use magic.

It seemed that the only indicator that this was another world was that there were apparently monster-like beasts about.

Suddenly, I felt the approach of something approaching from deeper within the forest. With the sound of footsteps getting closer, the sound of pig oinks became more abundant.

From the depths of the thicket emerged three bipedal pigs that were all around a hundred and sixty centimetres tall.

They had a hunched over posture, thick arms, and were carrying clubs made from logs. They also had reddish skin and wore nothing. Standing on short legs, their stomachs protruded out in front of them.

Fantasy has finally appeared.

Orcs in the game had similar builds, but there were some slight differences. The intelligence seems to be lower than in the game, as this orcs have no metal weapons or armor. They were the all-stars of small fries in the game for level 20-40 players.

If it is only this, I should be able to handle this much with a little wiggle room. My current body was at the highest level of 255 due to my hardcore grinding.

The normal level limit was 250, but that cap was lifted by completing special requirements. The levels after the cap removal granted to ten time the stat boost of the normal a normal level gain, so my actual ability should be equal to a level 300 character.

The three orcs seem to be communicating with their squalls. One points to the two boars laying by the stream and said something. He was gesturing in a way that indicted a good catch.

When they finally notice my figure sitting on a nearby rock, one let out a shrill cry.

“pigii ~~~!!”

“buhitsu!? hugotsuhugotsubuhi!!”

The call seems to have alerted the others, as they all raised their clubs and came charging at me. The speed was not fast in the slightest. I could easily make out the vibrations in their protruding stomachs as they ran.

Putting on my helmet, I instantly transported behind the them. I proceed to whip out my sword, and cut through the neck of the slowest orc.

“buhiyutsu!?”

The orc head was taken off from the chin upwards.

The other orcs were surprised that the enemy had disappeared, and were desperately looking around. Then the two of them finally realized something.

I swung my sword from the right to the left, and felt no resistance as the slowest orc’s head was sent flying and its body dropped. There was blood gushing out the body of the dead orc.

“pigitsu!!? pigii ~~~!!!”

The remaining two orcs raised a scream, and started to run deeper into the forest.

I didn’t chase after them because I already had the 2 wild boars and 1 orc head.

I drop the head into the water, to wash away the blood. Even though it came from an orc, it looked just like a pig’s head to me. I still put it in the game bag anyway.

The head should count as proof of subjugation.

I went to two boars out by the stream, and began to bind the two with some of the spear rope I had. The 2 should have weighted over 100 kg but due to the level of my body, I barely felt anything.

I move through the grooves of the trees as I start to leave the forest. I got a little turned around as I walked, but I was eventually able to spot the highway.

Out on the highway, I see the day is starting to fade away. It should be around 3:00 p.m. right?

Looking around as I transported, I made my way back to Rubierute. When I just make it to the fork in the road, I saw other people making their way towards the city. From here to the city, It seems that I will have to make the trek on foot.

An hour later, I reached the east gate of the city. I simply showed the guards my pass to get inside.

The people that came before me were surprised, when they looked at the game that I was bringing in. After all it wasn’t something that a normal traveler could carry with one hand.

When I arrived at the adventurer’s guild, I just walk through the double-doors to enter.

Unchanged from this morning, the one-eyed bear of a man was sitting in the cage. There was nobody else here but a guy doing office work in the back.

The lips of the bear-like uncle seemed to twist, as I make my way towards the counter.

I originally though the cage was to protect the person at the counter, but looking at the uncle, I imagine that its real propose is to keep a dangerous animal from getting out.

“A bit early. Have you hunted something?”

In response to that, I take the wild boar from over my shoulder and place it on the floor. Then I place my game bag on the counter, and take out the orc head.

“It’s these three. Can a adventurer’s certification be issued?”

“Well, I didn’t think it would be possible to bring back three within half a day. Is it one orc and two wild burba. What about the meat and magic stone of the orc?”

The boars seem to be called burba. It also seem that orc meat was edible. One piece seemed to sell for 5 sek.

Finally, since orcs were monsters, they seemed to have magic stones as their center. When I said that I didn’t take the magic stone, the man laughed saying “You really aren’t strapped for cash”. The magic stone of a orc was about the size of a pinky, and is priced at 1 sek. It seems that I lost out on one silver coin.

It seemed a little wasteful when I though about the cost of one night in a cheap inn. Next time, I should collect as many of them as I can.

After the inspection of the hunted game, a metal plate the size of a dog tag was placed on the counter.

“It is proof of adventure certification. You need to pay the 3 sek registration fee and provide your name.”

“It is Arc.”

After saying my name, I hand the 3 sliver coins to the uncle, and pick up the the adventurer certification plate. There was a 5-digit serial number written in roman like numerals, as well as 3 stars engraved into it.

When I stare at the plate, the unknown letters are translated in my head. 『”Rhoden kingdom, Rubierute branch adventurer』was engraved on the tag. It was somewhat strange.

That reminds me, I am able to understand the people that I talk to just fine. Really this it……

There has been no trouble with reading or writing.

“What are the stars for?”

“They are used to measure the capability of the adventurers. Three stars mean that you are capable of handling orcs alone. The highest level is seven, but those guys are rare finds.”

The one-eyed bear-like uncle was giving off an improbable aura, as he laughed and smiled.

Among the seven ranks, three stars doesn’t seem to be good or bad. It seemed to be the『Normal』ranking in the guild.

“Usually adventurers just pick a job from the board over there.”

Near the entrance was a bulletin board, that was covered entirely with wooden plaques. It was similar to  dedication plaques found at a shrine.

I took one of the wooden plaques in my hand. The translation of the writing occurred in my head, and the description of the text appeared in my mind.

Each of these wooden plaques seem to represent an request. Studying the plaques, it seem that once a request is completed, they sand them down so a new one can be engraved on it. Paper was probably a high-class item.

I decided to look through the request for the time being.

“A chore request wonderland.”

The majority of the quest are chore request, vermin subjugation in fields, crop collecting in the field, debris hauling, cleaning the aqueducts. It would be more accurate to call the adventures guild a labor union. The composition was also rather low.

“A good percent of request require a lot of man power, so the local guild delegates those request regularly. If you’re looking for more lucrative work then you should explore the mercenary section the guild delegates. The adventurers that take on those quest are know to have a lot of pocket money, and it is a great way to build up your reputation”

Doing the mercenary quests is out of the question, the probability of my real form being found out would skyrocket if I did.

I need to do a simple quest for the time being, to get a sense of the atmosphere around here. Thinking it over, I take one of the request plaque off the board and place it on the counter.

It was a request from Rita village to escort a medical herb collection. The reward was quite low, being only a single silver coin. I picked it because I was a little interested in the medical herbs.

The bear-like uncle had a wondering face, when he read the request’s contact.

“Really, are you serious? Frankly speaking, its a job that doesn’t match the reward.”

“No problem. I’m only interested in the collection of the herbs.”

“Are you crazy. You can’t go soft for the client on this request. It would be okay if you took something else.”

The bear-like uncle says so, as he starting the request acceptance procedures. The request was from a 13 year old village girl.

“When the quest is complete have the client hand you the quest completion plaque. When you submit the request and completion plaques together you will be paid in full.”

I leave the guild building after hearing the way to get to the village and thanking the bear-like uncle.

I then enter the merchant association building. Some time ago, the bear-like uncle said I should take the game I hunted here, so that they can buy it off me.

The merchant association building was larger that the guilds one, and there was a lot more staff to deal with the larger number of visitors.

The counter of the association building was divided by iron-barred windows, and there were many employees working behind it. When I called out t0 the staff, a middle-aged man comes out to greet me.

“Hello. How may I help you today?”

“I’m here to ask about the purchase of these fellows.”

I show the two burba over my shoulder to the receptionist. The receptionist then directed me to the warehouse representative. Exiting the building, a carriage stopped across the street, and I loaded the game before being taken to the warehouse location to see about the purchases.

A thin young man comes out to the table with my catches on it. Then began his inspection of the game. I also took out the head of the orc as well.

“It’ll be 7 sek and 5 sok for the burbas, and 1 sek for the orc head. In total that comes to 1 suk and 6 sek.”

The burba were worth 7 pieces of silver and 5 copper pieces apiece, while the head was worth one silver. While I though about such things, the staff member pulled out one gold coin and five silver ones. An extra copper is also paid.

I place the money in my pouch and left.

The sun has long since started to set, and dusk was starting to dye the the area.

I’ll stay the night here again, then depart for Rata village in the morning.

# *Chapter 8「What, These Aren't Medicinal Herbs? It's a Monster!」Part 1*

The next morning, I wake up to the noise of the market.

I had stayed the night in the same inn as before. My sleeping position was also the same as before, sitting on the bed with my back against the wall.

Straightening out my stiff body, I grab my luggage and carry it to the first floor.

No one was at the counter again. I open the door and enter the main street, heading straight for the east gate.

In order to complete the request I received yesterday, I had to go to Rata village which was half a day away by horse.

I found a shop that sold bread while I was making my way through the market. There was only one type of bread, the texture is like a baguette, but it is shaped like a large piece of melon bread. The price was the same as the grilled rabbit I bought yesterday. It seemed a little expensive, but I buy it just to try it out.

After that I continued on my way, only stopping at the aqueduct to refill my gourd. The small plaza in front of the gate had several armored men hanging around, and their eyes frequently darted all around. Perhaps they are members of a mercenary corps that is based in town.

The gate is the same as the other, so I simply show my pass and leave out of it. I walk northward along the town wall, until I pass the wheat field's moat. Along the way, farmers in the middle of the fields would stop what they were doing and bow their heads to me. They seem to think that I was a royal knight.

When I reached the north side of Rubierute, a larger pathway than the one leading here appeared. I push forward on this northward path. Once I was out of view of the field and pedestrian travel had stopped, I proceed to advance with【Dimensional step】.

The route that I was told, instructed that I should take the left path at the fork in the road. After a while of traveling, a post stuck into the ground appeared at a split in the road. The left side deteriorated into a flatted grass path, indicating that it at at least had been used. While taking note that the path ran through the woods, I resumed my transfers down the now grass road.

On the other side of the forest, a village surrounded by a mud and log wall, and adjacent to a small field came into view. The village is surrounded by its own moat, and part of the gate seems to be suspended from some firm ropes. If an enemy tried to attack, the village could just drop a section of the the gate on them.

In front of the gate, were two old men with spears, that were sitting and sharing a story. From here it was a short walk, when one of the men spots me, he quickly notified his partner. The two elderly men make a hand gesture in my direction before they resumed talking to one another.

While one of the men raised their spears, I ran right up to the village. To be honest, the impression the gatekeepers invoked did not seem all that reliable.

“kn-kn-Knight-sama! Wh-What business brings you you to such a remote village?”

“Hmm, there is no need to be so formal. I’m just an adventurer. I have come here today to complete the request of Marca of Rata village.”

“Marca? You don’t mean the oldest child of Senna do you?”

“Old man, could you guide me to Marca’s house?”

“”Y-YES! No problem.”

After the reply, the old men let me into the village. While the other gatekeeper seemed annoyed because of the extra work, I paid him no mind as I continued into the village.

Once I entered, every pair of eyes in the village were centered on me. They were probably cautious because outsides, especially ones in full body armor, were a rare thing. I feel that the reaction will be the same everywhere I go……

The houses in the village, did not give off the feel of actual houses. They were more like huts then anything else.

The old man knocks on the door of one of the huts, and calls to the resident inside.

“Senna, are you in there!? There is a visitor here for you!!”

I hear the reply of a woman from inside, after a while the door is gently opened. However, I see no one within the gap. Lowering my gaze, a girl that looked around 10 years old is seen.

“Ah, Helena? Where is your mother? This knight here needs to talk with her.”

When the girl called Helena heard the old man’s questions, she opened the door completely and urged us to enter.

“Well Knight-sama, as for me……”

The old man said only that, before retreating back towards the gate.

“I’ll be entering”

Once inside the house, I saw a large stone fire pit, that had a pot set atop it. In the corner, some wooden tableware was arranged. On the floor of the rest of the home, were a couple

wooden furnishings. A table with four chairs around it, and and 2 beds with screens around them.

The girl was standing next to the table with a worried expression. She had bowl-cut dark blond hair, and brown eyes that reflected an active mind behind them.

From the bed, limping along, came a women. She also had the dark blonde hair of the girl, but hers was tied in the back and reached her shoulders. Her clear blue eyes were surrounded by a delicate and freckled face. She was around 170 cm tall, and her abundant chest was masterfully bound within her dress like clothing.

"I am Helena's mother, Senna. Wh-what business might you have with us? I do not believe that my family has any connections to a knight household……"

"My name is Arc. I'm not a knight, I'm an adventurer. So please relax yourselves. A lady with a bad leg, should be sitting when she talks."

"Th-Thank you…… So what brings you to our home?"

The mother, Senna, bowed a little before sitting in one of the tables chairs. I also take a seat after she was firmly seated. It was a good sturdy chair.

To the question of my purpose here, I reached into my sack and showed her the request plaque.

"As I said my name is Arc, and I have taken up this request from the adventurer's guild. A girl named Marca is the one that place the request. Is she here?

"Eh? She did such a thing?! Marca is out in the fields right now……, she should be back this afternoon."

Unfortunately, the girl that made the request seems to be out for the time being. She'll return around noon, it shouldn't be that much of a wait. I could afford to stay here until then.

"I could wait here for her. ……If it isn't to much trouble, could you tell me what happened to your leg?"

To kill my boredom, I try to start up a conversation. It was a little sad to watch her move around with that cloth bandage over her left leg.

"It's fine. A large monster appeared close by recently…… I injured my leg while escaping, so now Marca has to work in the field alone. However, I'm one of the lucky ones. At the time of the incident someone died, causing the whole village to be thrown into turmoil……"

It appears that I picked the wrong topic, give the atmosphere in the house. Helena, who had been hiding behind her mother, glanced over my way when the atmosphere became heavy.

That reminds me, don't I have the sub-class of pope? Shouldn't I be able to heal her injury? It was, after all, it was the upper limit of the priest class. So a wide verity of healing and curse removal spells should be possible.

Wait, the high level healing abilities of a pope wouldn't be needed. First I should test out the low level healing spells of a priest. Since I haven't been injured since I came here, I haven't had the chance to test out healing magic. I've only used the attack magic【Flame】so far.

"Ma'am, if it's alright with you, could I examine your leg. Since it's been a while, I don't know if it will work, but I can try to heal your leg.

"Huh? N-No, that's……"

Confused at the proposition, the mother let out a high voice.

No wonder, I mean we only met today. Furthermore the other party's face is concealed by a helmet. If suddenly asked to show you leg, you'd certainly want to refuse.

However, when young Helena heard that her mother's leg could be healed, she stared at me for a moment. Then she gently lifted the wounded leg up, so that I could inspect it.

The mother, Senna, smiled wryly as she resigned herself to fate.

Agreeing to it, I place my right hand over the wounded leg and tried to invoked the spell. Softly chanting【Heal】, white lights appeared from my hand and wrapped around Senna's leg. Upon contact, the lights were absorbed into her skin.

The mother and daughter vacantly watched the spectacle before them , but afterward Helena removed the bandage from her mother's leg. What emerged from the bandage was a perfectly fine leg.

"Mom! There is no injury! No scars either!!"

Helena's demeanor completely changed from a while ago. Now she had a large smile and could not seem to stop jumping for joy.

Looking at her daughter's smile, Senna rubbed her head before bowing to me.

"Thank you very much. Arc-sama, you surely must be a famous priest. I can't believe that there is no trace left of the wound……"

"No, I only wanted to try since it had been a while, I didn't even have much confidence that it would work. The wound was healed, and that's for the best"

Actually, this was my first time using recovery magic in real life, so I'm the one that is benefiting the most here…… Judging from her reaction, there seems to be an awareness of healing magic. Now only the extent of this world capability with it is unknown.

"I'm home mother."

The eldest daughter, Marca, finally returned home from the field. The curious girl place a large collection baskets near the door. Her height was around 150 cm, and her light brown hair was tied into pigtails, that rested above her shoulders. Her blue eyes were the same as her mother's. She was also tanned a healthy color.

"Marca, did you put out a request to the adventurers guild? I am here to complete that request. You are the requester right?"

"Ah! My request was received by Knight-sama?! The request was for a escort for medicinal herb collecting."

"Are you mad! The herb collection is dangerous on its own! Yet you intended to go, even with the recent monster appearance?!"

"But……, The request fee has already been paid for and the reward was already posted……"

The mother, that heard the content of the request, harshly refused it. Marca frowned, as the request had already been paid for. I wonder what happens when the client abandons the request? The absurd notion of lost profits spring form my head.

"So! I will go to collect the herbs instead!"

"Wait a minute mother! How can you go collecting with that injured leg!"

"Quite down and listen Marca! Knight-sama has already healed my leg! Therefor it is alright for me to enter the forest!! Look."

Senna lifted the hem of her skirt a little, to show Marca the completely healed leg. Upon seeing the healed leg, Marca looked my way in surprise.

"I'm grateful that my mother's leg was completely healed. Mother, you don't even know where the herbs grow! So it is pointless for you to go!"

Apparently the mother's knowledge of medicinal herds wasn't that high. Night might come before the mother and daughter finish this argument.

"You are the reason that I sought an escort. Did you see the state of that injury mother?!"

"Then it's decided!! Knight-sama will guide you through the forest!"

After being told so, Marca picked up her basket and left the went outside. After realizing what just happened, I chase after her. As I left the house I received another thank you from Senna. If trouble appears, I can just grab Marca and escape with【Dimensional step】.

When I look around in in the village, Marca was waving her hand at me near the gate. I hoist my sack over my shoulder again and start heading over there. Together with Marca, I leave the village and walk along its northern perimeter.

"Knight-sama, thank you again for taking this request. Half of the reason I needed to collect

the herbs was because of my mothers injury. However, since Knight-sama already healed it, I only have one reason now.

Marca said so, while laughing amusingly.

“Hmm, so what’s this reason to go then?”

“Last year, my father passed away do to illness. I help in the field, but it is still quite hard on us. The medicinal herbs can be bought at a good price in the city, it could ease the strain on mother a little…… Every year, I picked herbs with my father, and he would sell them, you know.”

“To fully ease the strain of your mother would take a lot of herbs. Isn’t the trip also dangerous?”

“Don’t you know, going from this forest you will be at the foot of the wind dragon mountain range. In the deeper parts, you find things like land dragons or wyverns, but it should be safe if we stay in the shallow areas. Although, we can’t stay to long because there are more monsters here than in other forests.”

I listen to Marca’s explanation as we enter the forest. Apparently, northeast of our current location was the wild dragon mountain range. Far away the white summits of the mountains can be seen.

While advancing through the forest, the pressure to leave this place only grow the further we went in.

Marca seemed to have found something, as she started to run. We approached a piece of land that was more sunken in than the surroundings, and had many rocks at the center of the pit. Between the the rock, a small patch of plants could be seen.

Marca goes down there, and starts to fill her basket with the plants. An innumerable amount of lotus shaped plant seem to have been collected at a fast pace.

“This is the cocla medicinal herb. It is effective in the treatment of wounds and skin diseases”

While collecting the herbs, Marca shook her braids and explained the plant’s uses. I scanned our surroundings, but there were no signs of beast or monsters. So I went down to help collect the cocla plant myself. Seeing my clumsy state, Marca started to laugh.

It seemed that watching a man, well over 2 meters tall and in full body, struggle to pick plants was an amusing sight.

After an hour, the basket was half full with the cocla plants. Though there were still some plants left between the rocks, Marca said we were moving to the next site. The next site was apparently the main collection site.

Once again the pressure to leave increased as we went farther along. When the wild animals noticed the pressure, they turned heel and ran, although we have yet to encounter any monsters.

We advanced in the forest for a while, before coming across a clearing. A gentle slope extends out, as I notice that the surrounding tree branches were a pale white, and that the trees were enclosed by circles of fallen white flowers. A sweet fragrance was also carried by the wind.

“We made it! The flowers are in full bloom! The kobumi tree branches are all pale white!!”

Filled with joy, Marca began to run toward the line of kobumi tress at full speed. I quickly tried to let out a warning for Marca to remain still. Beyond the tress, I saw a rock like object. But unlike a normal rock, this thing gave of the feeling of a living being.

“Marca, don’t move!! Something is hiding there!!!”

“Eh?”

# *Chapter 9「What, These Aren't Medicinal Herbs? It's a Monster!」Part 2*

Whether in reaction to Marca's movement or my yell, the creature shook its massive body, before standing up.

I was able to grasp its structure from here. From head to tail, its lizard-like body exceeded well over 6 meters. It has six strong looking legs, and spotted greyish-green scales. On its head was a green cockscomb, on its back were color changing scales, and on it's tail was an array of spiny protrusions. The centerpiece of it all were the eyeballs bigger then its head, giving the thing a chameleon like appearance.

It opened its wide mouth, revealing that it's jaw was pack full of fangs, and let out a weird cry.

"kurorororoooooooooo!"

I remembered such a creature from the game.

Giant Basilisk.

A monster in the level range of 150-170, it can be said that it isn't an enemy with high attack power. However, for beginner and intermediate players, the combination of petrifying eyes, poison mist, and paralyzing claws made for a deadly combo of abnormality effects.

It really was a dangerous forest, for it would be nearly impossible for a ordinary villager to deal with it. Wait, why is this monster here?

Upon seeing the figure, Marca started to run away from the Kobumi trees, back to my side.

However, it gave chase. The Giant Basilisk raised its six legs and chased after her, only for it to suddenly stop following for some reason, and began to shake its head up and down. This strange movement allowed me to see that its cockscomb had turned red.

Was the tell the same as the game?!

It looked like it was about to use its petrifying gaze attack, the gaze was usually released in a fan-shaped arc for wide-spread damage.

Throwing down the sack, and reached for the shied on my back. I run to Marca and picked her up, before placing her behind the shield in my right hand.

The mythical grade equipment『Heavenly shield of Titus』. It can prevent most abnormal status effects depending on the level difference, and it raised all abnormal resistances. With this shield, I take a defensive posture.

The next moment, the “paan” sound of a sonic boom is heard through the whole area as dull shock waves run though the shield. I see Marca, in the shadow on the shield, covering her ears and closing her eyes. From were I stand everything is normal. The petrification seems to have been negated.

In the game there was a cool-down time for the attack, but I can’t depend on that here. In addition, it is impossible to take advantage of enemy attack patterns.

I step forward quickly, and hide Marca behind my back. I place my hand on the sword at my waist. Due to Marca’s presence, this has to end with a long-range attack.

Holy Knight’s skill【Sword of judgment】!!

My sword began to shine with light, as I unsheathed it and swung it down on the spot. Instantly, a magic circle formed under the giant basilisk’s feet, and a sword of light appeared above its head.

“gurorooroooooooo!!!”

The 5 meter long sword pierced the bulky body of the giant basilisk. Afterwards, a sound like shattering metal rings in the area, as the light sword started to crumble.

As calmness returned to the area, the bulky body of the giant basilisk hits the ground with a thud. I did not move an inch, as I observed the surroundings still in the downward swing position. The power of the blow seems to have killed it……

Did the【Sword of judgment】always create such a massive light sword? Did the strain of the situation cause me to apply more power to the skill then normal? Or was it the same as before, just with the power increased in reality…… Either of those could be a good explanation; I just don’t know which was right.

While clinging to my back, Marca could only look at the fallen monster and reply with a “Wow!”

“Marca, was that the monster that recently appeared around the village?”

“No. It wasn’t so big when I saw it. I think the one that’s around the village is called a Fanged Boar?”

Macra’s pigtails shook when she shakes her head no. Noticing something, she pointed a finger to the slope and spoke up.

“Ah! There’s another one over there!!”

I looked over to were her finger was pointing, and sure enough, there was another giant basilisk on the other side of the slope. When I made eye contact, the monster made a hasty retreat.

“Hmm, it went off somewhere.”

It might be cautious because its friend was defeated. Since there is no sign of anything else, the herb collection can continue.

“Marca. Are the kobumi plants still good?”

When I ask so , she goes running to the kubumi trees. When she reached the base of one, she started to pluck the branches of the white flowers.

After seeing such a sight, I return my gaze to the defeated giant basilisk. Its 6 meter long body was laying on the ground. While I don’t know the location of the heart, since it was a monster it should have a magic stone. Finding it in this large body will be a challenge. Will it be in a position similar to a crocodile’s or a lizard’s heart?

I roll the hulking beast on its backside. Incredibly, it was an easy feat to accomplish.
Was the position of a crocodile’s heart near abdomen or the forepaw? Since it seemed a little hard to do with the dagger in my sack, I have to use my sword to cut out the heart. When I sliced open the basilisk’s abdomen , a stone the size of a baby’s fist came out. I held the stone in the sunlight, and it reflected a purple light in my eyes. With this stone I should be alright for a while.

Since you probably can’t eat the basilisk like the orcs, its body will become the nourishment of the forest. After all, the pig-like orcs are a hundred steps above this grotesque chameleon. By all odds it doesn’t seem like it would be delicious anyway. It also seems like it would be hard to carry back……

“Knight-sama, could you reach the flowers on the top?”

While I was pondering the treatment of the giant basilisk, Marca asked for assistance. Putting the magic stone in my bag, I walk toward the kobumi tree next to Marca.

The flowers of the kubumi tree extended out on every branch. They were an arrangement of five small white petals, and released an indescribably sweet aroma.

Marca had started to gathering the flowers of the lower branches already.

“What effect do these have?”

“Umm～ father didn’t teach me. Once they are dried and turned into powder, he would only sell it to adults for a high price. Since it can cure illness, it has to be a medical herb right? Knight-sama, do you know any disease that only adults suffer from?”

Without stopping, Marca asked such a question.

A disease only adults get……, like a geriatric disease? However, that was the generic name of a disease and it was changed when a child died from it. I couldn’t come up with anything.

“No, I don’t know the name of any disease like that ”

“I see～. Next time, I will ask a expert. If I don’t know the effects of the merchandise, I can be taken advantage of.”

She laughs saying so.

The two of us worked fast to pick the flowers, and in no time the basket was full. I also put some of the flowers into my game sack. When the sack was full, I hoist it over my shoulder and prepare to head back.

On the way back, I still followed behind Marca. She seemed to use topography to find her way around the forest, but to me it all just looked the same. If not for her, the expedition would have ended up a disaster.

As the density of the trees faded away, the field around the village came back into view.
There, a large black boar was digging up the land.

“Ah, the fanged boar! That’s the one that attacked the village before. It came so close to the village.”

Noticing either Marca’s voice or our presence, the fanged boar raised its head and let out a roar. It and the burba radically differed in terms of size. Its body was 2 meters long and it stood at around Marca’s height. There were also four tusks protruding from its lower jaw.

After building some power in its hind legs, the boar charged at us. I quickly lowered my sack and stared down the approaching fanged boar.

However the mad dash didn’t seem all that fast to me. Taking the rush head on, I grab the set of tusk with my hands, and slam the boar against the ground. The fanged boars head hit the ground at high speed, and after that it fall silent.

In a rage, I started to stab at its abdomen with my sword, when I remember something. While the boar could act wild with its powerful limbs, if I hold down its head, there would be no problem.

“Marca, I will deliver the final blow. Ask a hunter of the village or somebody else if there is something in the village that this thing can be loaded on?”

“Y-Yes. Understood! Please wait!!”

Marca responded in a hurry, before running towards the village. Seeing her off, I hope that she doesn’t fall down on her way there.

After a few minutes, a couple villagers arrive while pulling a trolley cart.
When they arrived, the boar was covered in its own blood and had lost the ability to move. It could only let out small breaths now.

The villagers stared at the dying fanged boar in a state of shock, before letting out a unanimous cheer of admiration. Under the instructions of a hunter, I placed the now dead beast onto the cart.

“How should we handle the disposal of this fellow, Knight-sama? The fur is usable, and the tusk can sell for a good price. The meat should also be delicious. You can have it carried into town if you hire a few villagers.”

While the the hunter inspects the game, I ask about its treatment.

“Hmm, I heard this fellow was a monster. Could you tan the pelt of this guy, and accept the tusks and magic stone as a reward? Also give the tanned pelt to Marca when it’s ready.”

“Huh? Would that be alright?”

“Eh, I get the pelt?! Knight-sama!”

The two of them were utterly shocked at my request. Though they say the pelt had great value, I had no use for it. So I gifted it to Marca, satisfied with the pleasure of her receiving it. A 40 year old uncle that is generous to small children (setting).

“I don’t mind. I think you should also distribute the meat within the village.”

The villagers pulling the cart heard what I just said, and unanimously voice their gratitude. Due to the monster appearing in the field frequently, the village appeared to have been experiencing problems. They even thought of forming a hunting party, or placing a request to the adventurer’s guild.

It’s likely that this fanged boar appeared near the village because it was driven out by the giant basilisks from earlier.

Once in the village, the fanged boar was dismantled by the side of the hunters house. When the news of the catch spread, everyone in the village became peeping toms, as they came to watch. The village chief even came out to personally thank me.
In the meantime, the day started to give way to night.

Since I could not do it, I leave the meat distribution and pelt removal to the hunter and volunteers. While, I return to Marca’s house. I needed to deliver the harvested Kobumi plants that were still in my game sack anyway.

Marca was in a good mood because she would be able to eat meat for a while.

“I’m home , mother! Guess what! Knight-sama was able to defeat the monster that was attacking the village!!”

When Marca got in, the first thing she mentioned was not the results of the harvest, but the monster subjugation.

“Huh!? You encountered the monster!? Is anyone hurt!? Are you hurt?!”

Her mother panicked, and grabbed hold of her to check for injury. She only lets out a sigh of relief, once she knew everything was alright. When she noticed her mother was crying, Marca became misty-eyed and repeatedly apologized to her. The youngest, Helena came and started to hug her sister from behind.

“Thank you very much for watching after my daughter. I don’t know how to express my gratitude……”

“According to the request, I was to serve as Marca’s escort. Marca, since the quest is complete, could you give me the completion plaque?”

“Ah, yes!”

Upon my request, she took out a wooden block, the size of a business card, from her clothes pocket. The request serial number was written on the wooden block.

“Thank you for everything.”

After an exaggerated nod, the cute Marca lowed her head and thanked me. I approached her and gently whispered,

“Marca, keep it a secret that we came across that large monster. I don’t want to worry your mother anymore than this.”

When I said so, she laughed in agreement. I place the wooden block in my luggage bag before leaving the house, while waving back at her.

After leaving the house, I could still hear the villagers chatting over at the hunter’s house. They were probably still dismantling the fanged boar. As sunset dyed the sly orange, a flock of birds was spotted entering the forest.

I have to get back to Rubierute before the gates closes. With the use of【Dimensional step】, I could simply transfer into the center of the city from outside the walls, but that will be a last resort.

I backtrack my way to the path from the village’s gate, while passing by returning fieldworkers. When I make it past the field, the presence of other people disappeared, and only the sound of rustling leaves and plants could be heard.

I will try to return to the city with【Transfer gate】this time. Last time I tried it, I only traveled 7 meters from where I was. It is still possible that this magic only works if you can visualize the location you wish to travel to.

I set the hall overlooking Rubierute as the transfer location. It was a location with little pedestrian traffic and I can clearly envision it in my mind. If I can get this work, then I would have a convenient way to travel to places I’ve already been. Locations with similar

landscapes will probably be impossible though.

Firstly, I try to firmly place Rata village into my memory. Looking back, I see smoke from multiple stoves rising from the village. That reminded me, I still had the bread left from this morning.

Turning away from the village, I bring the Rubierute city set point to the forefront of my mind.

"【Transfer gate】!"

The 3 diameter pale magic formation appears as I active the spell. My vision goes dark for a moment, and I'm left with a floating sensation. Before I realized it, the scenery had completely changed.

I was standing on the hill overlooking Rubierute. It seemed that【Transfer gate】was a success. Now if I increase the number of destinations, I should be able to wander around with ease. It is a truly great magic.

I entered the city from the east gate, and made my way to the adventurers guild's building. I hear the gate closing bell shorty after my arrival, it seems I have just barely made it.

Entering the guild building, I'm greeted by the evil smile of the caged-bear uncle. I'm a little impressed that Marca was able to come to place, where such a brutal person resided, and make her request.

"The request is completed. Can I get the proof of completion?"

I open my luggage bag, and place the request and completion plagues on the counter. After confirming it, the bear uncle hands over a silver coin. With this my first request is complete.

Today I will also stay at the cheap inn again, but what should I do from tomorrow onward?

# *Chapter 10「Strategic Retreat」*

The next morning starts at the usual inn, and I wake up with my usual appearance.

While sitting on the bed, I took out the bread from yesterday. I took a drink from my gourd after biting into the bread. The bread was very different from what I used to eat in the other world. There is a salty taste to it, and it is heavier and harder. It like it just sits in the pit of your stomach……

While there was a bakery in the city, it seems that that villages only made it for festivals and other celebrations. I learned from Marca yesterday, that villagers mainly eat wheat rice porridge.

It was unexpected that they would have Japanese porridge in this world. Its impossible to have takeout, but I could make it for myself in a deserted location. This body was a mixed blessing. I don't have to fear overeating but it was hard to find places to eat.

When I finished eating the not so good bread, I carried my luggage down to the first floor. I passed by the empty counter and exit the building.

I headed to the adventurers guild on the main street. Today there were a few adventures standing in front of the request board. This is the first time I've seen so many people in the guild building. When I approach the request board, without even speaking, the other adventures looked my way in surprise.

After all the request board only had personal request that gave out pocket money. There wasn't a single plaque that offered more then 5 silver coins on it. Since there were no quest that interested me today, I decide to go hunt game on the outskirts of town and sell it to the merchant association.

The destination is south of Rubierute, I enter the forest on the opposite side on the river bank. I was excited because its like I'm going to explore a new map in the game.

I ended up searching the forest on the other side of the river all day. I first came across a small group of orc, but after I beat one the others ran away at full speed. It appears that orcs were cowardly monsters.

I carried the orc I killed over my shoulder.

The forest had a variety of monsters and animals in it. A majority of which I didn't know. But unlike the game, they were hesitant in trying to kill me. Drops didn't fall and my experience point didn't increase when I killed a monster either.

Yet, the living area of humans was predominantly small. Perhaps the territories can't expand without a constant monster killing force.

Deep inside the forest I found a minotaur inside a cave. The minotaur was about 3 meters

tall, with the head and lower body of a cow, and the upper body of pure human muscle.
If it was the game, then this fellow would have been equipped with an iron axe, as the race had acquired metal crafting long ago for the purpose of destroying humanity. But just like the orcs, this guy was still carrying around a club.

Speaking of which, I have yet to see a human use magic. Magic should be one of the weapons supporting the human territories. Maybe the nature of the power and the power structure of this world keep magic out the reach of commoners.

While thinking about such things, I crossed through the west gate, and made my way to the merchant association's warehouse. Like last time, the thin young man came out to the inspection table. I sat the orc down from my shoulder and asked the price.

"One orc is 7 sek and 5 sok."

It was the same as the one meter long burba? These bodies were cheap. Was it because the orcs were easier to chase down than the burba?

Well since my goal is to steadily earn an income I don't mind. When I said I'd except the offer, then man left his seat to prepare the money.

While I calmly waited for my payment, I started to hear two merchants talking. It's common sense not to ignore information that can be useful to you.

"Recently, there's a rumor going around about a strong monster appearing near the border. Near the east border village and Reburan, a caravan that was passing through suffered heavy damages."

"The forest is close to the wind dragon mountain range, it's not unusual for there to be more monster around there, is it?"

"Idiot, monsters don't usually come all the way down to the road."

"Hmm, could a dragon be on a rampage in the mountain range?"

The staff member appeared with my payment while I was in the middle of thinking about the dragon the merchants mentioned. After verifying the amount, I place the money in my pouch.

Taking a leisurely walk though the city, I contemplate returning to the usual inn today. I need to establish my own base someday and determine where I should wander from there. A base of my own will allow me to remove this armor and relax without worrying about anyone seeing.

With【Transfer Gate】, even if my base is at the bottom of the sea I can instantly move back to town.

First, I should investigate the geography while earning a steady income.

**Third person point of view**

The city or Rubierute has strategic importance, as its highway runs through both the city of Diento and the royal capital, that is in the center of the Rhoden kingdom.

Going from the northern boarder of the capital there are two major bypasses around the calcutta mountain range. One path leads to the east while the other to the west.

Although a short distance from the capital, the western path leads to the ribot wastelands. The wastelands were dotted with small towns where the water supply was scarce. The barren terrain also made large-scale transportation difficult.

In comparison, the eastern path traveled down the rydell river, that brings water into the capital, and is composed of a low hilly terrain. In addition, the the eastern side of the calcutta mountains is dotted with comparatively large cities. You had to cross the rydell river, which flowed from the wind dragon mountain range, twice on this path, but other than that its relatively easy to advance.

Diento is the city upstream the rydell river, and it was stationed right in front of a major bridge. The 300 meter long stone bridge starts off at the city's south gate and crosses the entire river. This fact also means that the city can also be viewed with strategic importance. Therefor, the city was built with double layered walls that allowed the city to act as a fort when needed.

The city was governed by marquis Triton. The castle in the center of town could be compared to a fortress in its own right. The castle walls were twice the size as normal, and the moat twice as wide.

In the office of the fortress, marquis Triton was going over the open documents on his desk.

Diento's marquis was a large man well past middle aged, had gray hair that reach his legs, and had grown a white mustache. His was dressed up in overly flamboyant clothes, that appeared to tightly wrap around his large frame.

Hearing a knock on the office door, he raised his eyes from the documents and gave permission for the person to enter.

"Excuse me"

The one that entered the office was Cyrus Dorman. The nervous Cyrus's face was pale, as he slicked back the thinning hair on top of his head, to cover up his bald spot.

Cyrus came before the desk and offered a deep bow to his master. Although, he did slick his hair back again when it fall out of place.

"The matter in Rubierute…… seems to have ended in failure."

At Cyrus ‘s words Triton twitches. He lifts his head from the paperwork, seats back in his chair, and lets out a large sigh.

“When I asked for talent, I heard that they were skilled correct?”

“I’m sorry. They were indeed talented, all of the escorts were defeated, but unluckily an adventurer was near by, and he defeated the bandits……”

“After all, a bandit is a bandit…… The bottom line is sweet! Having only kept the women alive, they lost due to their own carelessness.”

With a bitter expression, lord Triton spit out his criticism. A look of agreement is seen on the pale-faced Cyrus.

“Why does prince Douglass want to sow discord in Rubierute anyway?”

“Well. In order for prince Douglass to gain the support of the east he has sent out this demand. If the northern border joins his highness’s faction then the east will completely belong to him, and he would be able to pursue Reburan in the west without worry. This would be beneficial to us because trading in the east will be centralized here.”

“Rubierute has the support of the west, so it likely to join her highness’s sect. Since it has yet to aligned with a faction, this shouldn’t be publicly know, but ……”

“If this isn’t discovered then it should be fine. We must hurry and secure the products. You must ship them soon. We need them delivered to the proper nobles before anyone catches wild of the plan! You must insure that princess Juliana doesn’t find out about this.”

Triton’s large body wiggles as he reaches into his desk’s drawer, pulls out a cigar, and lights it. Puffs of smoke are slowly exhaled, while a coughing Cyrus reports the products’ status.

There are 4 products and they are being held in the “storehouse” underground. I will go secure the new addition right now……”

“Securing the products is getting harder as well. Have the men been acting with unnecessary vigilance?…… Hurry it up as much as possible. I haven’t seen Audrain in a while, how is that fool doing?”

“When I checked in Audrain-sama’s room, he said the the swords used for the product procurement were not satiable for the task.”

“That imbecile! This is not a game! The swords are enough to enter the elves’ forest with, anything else would just drag them down!! I’ve heard enough, leave.”

Upon hearing those words Cyrus gave a gracious bow before quietly leaving the room. Triton took one last puff of the cigar before violently rubbing it out, he then scowled at the documents open on the desk.

**Arc point of view**

A few days later, although I have been investigating the area around Rubierute to find an ideal base location, nothing has changed in my day to day life.

The figure of my flashy armor attracted a lot of attention at first, but things seemed to have calmed down now. Yet, the only places I can eat are inside my inn room or far outside of town, simply because I never know when people might be looking at me.

However today was different because of what happened this morning. It happened after I left the inn, looked at the request in the guild building, and left for the west gate to investigate and earn my daily income.

However, downtown had an unusual atmosphere today. Moving towards the west gate, the amount of people was larger then normal. I decided to walk behind a pair of men heading towards the gate so I could listen in on their conversation.

"I heard that the party that brought down the giant basilisk only has five people in it! They should be bringing it to the square now!"

"That's true!? That thing killed so many people, the party must be really strong…… Giant basilisks are large game, after all. In the neighboring territories has there ever been any stories about them?"

"Recently there have been a lot of stories like this one. Is it a bad omen or something?"

It seems that a group was able to kill a giant basilisk. In this world it seems that doing so was a major achievement. However, it appears that it was a monster that is rarely seen. Thought I saw two of them in the wind dragon forest……

The small square was already crowded with people, in the center of the square was a wagon surrounded by five people, one of the five was reciting their heroic battle while making hand gestures.

It was like being at a play, as the townspeople devoured the story that they were listening to.

A giant basilisk was cut into portable pieces and pilled on the wagon. Certainly it would be impossible to carry the gigantic body on the wagon in one piece. The head was enshrined at the top of the pile for everyone to see.

While watching, I tried to ask a nearby large man a question.

"Is slaying the monster giant basilisk such a big deal?"

The man I asked immediately turned around in surprise, and with a baffled expression answered my question.

“Kinght-sama, when a giant basilisk appears ether a famous adventurer party needs to be employed or the fedual lords army has to be sent out. Simply put, it take a lot of money to take even one of them down. It seem that the poisonous meat can be dried and powdered to make poison darts used for monster subjugation though.”

How much could you make if you bring back one…… But it would surely cause an uproar if I kill one alone and bring it back.

I was contemplating this when a group separate from the normal crowd catches my eye.

The group of metal armored soldiers are led to the center of the square by a civil officer-like man in good attire. The people around noticed it, and the noise in the square gradually died down, until only a few whispers could be heard.

A pathway opened directly to the center of the square, and the group of soldiers and adventures faced each other.

The man in the fine clothes was tall but skinny, looked to be in his mid 30s, and stood in the middle of the solders. After arranging his hair a bit the man stepped forward.

“I am Buckle De Robert viscount and feudal lord of Rubierute, and this is Bosco Futran and Zetorasu Futran. Which one of you acts as your representative?”

“Oh, r-right! We are the adventure team『Iron Fang』I’m the leader Masco!!”

The man that was recounting the heroic tale before strutted out the reply with a clearly strained tone. The other members of the party were rigidly standing at attention.

“Are you the people that killed this giant basilisk?”

“……, Y-Yes!!”

Zetorasu question seemed to horrify the man, Masco remained silent for a moment before letting out that small affirmation.

“I heard that it was in the shallow part of the wind dragon forest. Is that correct?”

“Yes!! It was located in the forest near Rata village!”

Huh? Didn’t I leave the one I defeated in the forest near Rata village.

Is it possible, that the one I left unattended is the same one on the cart? However there was no evidence, and it’s not like I want to claim ownership of it anyway. In fact there were two giant basilisk. It could very well be the one that escaped.

“A little while ago, I saw two of them in the wind dragon forest……”

“What!? Is that true knight-sama?!”

The large man next to me let out a loud voice when he heard me muttering to myself. Naturally the loud voice caused everyone to immediately turn in this direction, and the surrounding people to move out of the way.

When Zetorasu noticed that the crowd parted by the loud voice, he eyebrow twitched a little as he challenge the statement.

“And you are?”

“No not me, Knight-sama’s unexpected commit caused me to speak……, it’s the truth!”

At the man’s words, Zetorasu looked at me directly. On my whole body I started to feel various gazes.

“No, I only said that I remember seeing two giant basilisks in the same place a few days ago.”

I couldn’t tell of the one here was the same one I killed or the one that got away, but…….

The information I spoke throw the square into a whirlpool of noise at once. The townspeople have been assured of both the reliability of the story and the impending danger.

“Huh?! Idiot, there were two of them! Was it by chance!? Why didn’t you report this to anyone!? Why did you remain quiet until now!?”

Zetorasu criticized me in a rough tone, and stared at me with angry eyes.

Even with such things said, I that was not familiar with their circumstances couldn’t judge the situation’s significance. I didn’t worry because an the time the other one ran deeper into the forest, so there was nothing to worry about.

“I saw the giant basilisks the first time. However from the distance I was at I couldn’t tell if they was a threat or not.”

In reality, it was the first time I had seen a real one. I encountered several of them in the game , and when I started hunting them I lost track of how many I saw.

At my answer Zetorasu closed his eyes, and his face gained a thoughtful expression. Are you thinking about what to do in the future?

Is he thinking that the two giant basilisk were trying to conceive children? In the game, it was arranged that basilisk evolved into giant basilisk. They were level 40-50 when they gained the use of poison spit, without that basilisk were featureless small fry.

“We have to return to the mansion to prepare a subjugation force!『Iron Fang』I request that you come with us. I want a few scouts to tag along with『Iron Fang』to carry out reconnaissance! By all means, please tell us how you were bravely able to slay the giant

basilisk!!”

The people calm down at the declaration they heard. It was probably a performance used to clear away the unease of the people.

The victims of this whole event would have to be the members of『Iron Fang』. They couldn’t seem to form the words they wanted to say. It must be a time consuming task for adventures to gain fame, so this opportunity might seem like a godsend.

However, each member of『Iron Fang』had a grim expression on their faces. It seems like the opportunity was a blessing they wanted to pass on somehow or other. I wasn’t invited to join these particular event. First of all, it’s better for me not to be involved with such troublesome things anyway.

With Zetorasu in the lead, the members of『Iron Fang』are lead to the feudal lord’s mansion.

If the feudal lords army appears the problem should be solved soon.

Since I don’t want to have contact with men in power, it’s better that I move to my own base before anymore problems come up. Thinking so, I turn away from the scene and head towards the west gate.

Based on a preliminary survey, there is a smaller town east of here, and apparently the largest neighboring city is called Diento. It was 3-4 days away by carriage.
Since my only luggage is on my back, lets head there.

But first a little peek at things over at Rata village—.

# *Chapter 11「Form of the City」Part 1*

I traveled the road by the sprite river upstream using【Dimensional step】. On the way there were a few small villages, that were surrounded by small-scale wooden walls.
After a while I saw the town of Koruna which was a smaller version of Rubrierute. The city was surrounded by a stone wall. While watching my surroundings, I proceeded farther up the road.

The calcutta mountain range could be seen in the southwestern direction, as I arrived at main river the sprite river split from, the rydell river. The rydell river flows east of the calcutta mountains and seems to pass through the capital eventually. Farther downstream the river my destination, Diento, came into view.

A journey that would take a carriage 3 days, was completed in less than half a day with my travel method.

The city of Diento is located upstream from the spirit river before the river reconnects to rydell, the main river. The size of the city might be 3 times the size of Rubierute? The surrounding field was also vast in scale. In the distance, the mighty walls that protect the city can be seen. Furthermore, the wall are double layered, and had private houses in between them. Inside each wall was a moat that surrounded the houses. It almost appeared as if the city itself was a giant fortress.

As the city walls are dyed in color of the sunset, I gaze at the land unobstructed by anyone. If a city such as this were in modern times it would be registered in a world heritage site, as its beauty can capture the hearts of those who view it.

Rebooting my brain, I proceed to the entrance of Diento. The people that work in the fields around town are quickly making their way home. From here I make my way to the city on foot. The eye-catching instant transfer would stick out too much.

However, there was a good distance from here to the city. Maybe I should speed walk?

I began to speed walk with such force that my mantle began to flutter. The people in front of me screamed and made way when they noticed my footsteps. It was an easy pace to move at, but I think it was a little frightening for others.

A 2 meter tall man in full body armor moving at a fast pace……, It's no wonder they scream……

Before long the city gate comes into view, so I returned to normal walking speed. If I approached the gate as I was before, I would no doubt be seen as a suspicious person.
The walls were around 7 meters tall, and soldiers were acting as sentries on the wall. As I pass through the large gate, the second one came into view. The following gate is station right at the base of the hill. I climbed the gentle slope and arrived at the second city wall, to enter the city I show my adventurer certification.

All of the building in the city seem to be made of stone. Three story buildings line the road, and the streets are crowded with people coming and going as they please. For the first time since I came to this world, I'm surrounded by the sound city life as street venders and barkeeps yell out to passersbies and people carry on about their business.

It feels a little nostalgic.

The layout of the streets seem complicated, and it might take some time to understand it all. When I entered a nearby bar, I found several people drinking to a good days work. I asked the uncle behind the bar for the location of a inn.

"Excuses me, I'm looking for an inn. Do you know a good place?"

"Our second and third floor act as an inn! How's 2 sek a night sound, sir?"

The bar owner recommended his own inn. I wonder, could I take a meal from the bar and eat it on in the room on the second floor?

"Can you take meals in the rooms?"

"I do not mind. Ah! Just make sure you return the tray when you're done eating. One meal is 3 sok, each time!"

I give the uncle 2 silver and three copper coins, and he immediately starts to put together a meal tray. With tray in hand, I climb up the stairs to my appointed room. I unlocked the room door on the third floor, and discovered that the rooms atmosphere was better then the inn I used to stay at. The bed was sturdy, and the blankets were well made. There was a small table with not only chairs but a foot stool as well.

Seating in one of the chairs, I set the meal down and removed my helmet.

It's my first proper meal in a long time. It simply consented of soup, salad, and a black piece of bread, all served on a wooden tray. Meat doesn't seem to be available. The black bread tasted the same as the bread I had before. But it was edible when I dipped it into the soup to soften it up. It was a bean soup that had been cooked in chicken broth. Quite delicious. As for the salad, it was two types of vegetables sprinkled with vinegar and salt. Was it lettuce and endives? No, it's doubtful that they would put such similar vegetables together.

After putting my helmet back on, I take the tableware to the first floor. The uncle looked at me strangely when I returned the tableware. It maybe strange for an armored guest to return the tableware still in has armor, after eating the meal in his room. Nothing in particular was said thought.

When I returned to the room, I set with my back against the wall and fell asleep as I usually did. The blanket remained on the bed, since there was no reason to place it over my armor.

Early next morning, the sound of a bell is heard from somewhere. Awakened by the sound, I go down to the first floor where the bar uncle was working on something in the kitchen.

Unlike the  before, this place isn't unmanned in the morning.

I place the room key on the counter and call out to the uncle in the kitchen before leaving.

After a little asking around, I arrived at this city's adventurer guild's building. The building was three stories high, but the structure wasn't that different from the other guild building. But there were more employees behind the counter. Thought none of them were like a caged bear. There were a large number of adventures in front of the quest board. The staff and adventures were all male, it might be possible that there weren't many female adventures.

I at least thought they would hire good-looking women to be receptionists……

In front of the request board, I catch a conversation between two adventures while I was looking at request plaques.

"A five man party from my corps went hunting four days ago and haven't been heard from since."

"Could they have been gotten by bandits or monsters? This place is close to the elf forest after all. The monsters there are usually quite strong right?"

"No, they should have been heading to the base of the calcutta mountain range near the capital……"

In this world, the outside of cities are full of dangers. Life and death are uncertain the farther you went out of town.

Nevertheless, coming here has finally given me conformation of the the elf race. I have yet to see any non-humans in the cities. After all, elves live in the forest, a place that would be outside the range on human survivability.

Since I'm in another world I'd like a glimpse at what it has to offer. That thought crossed my mind after confirming the contents of the request plaques. Due to the larger population there were more request, but they were still mostly chores. It seems like I can't find good work unless I join a adventurers corps.

It seems that I'll hunt something in the forest today and sell it. I consider the adventurers' corps as I leave.

A near by vender was selling dried fruit and I decided to buy some. Since it looks like a strawberry, lets call it that. The guy said the the wild strawberries grow in the west. The vender scooped up some of then in a cup, after I handed him 8 copper coins. It seems that the berries were only available half a year, and wouldn't last half a day fresh ether. I tossed them into a small bag and placed them in my sack.

While heading for the gate, I make sure to listen in on the people around me.
Before long I reach the south gate of the inner wall. Showing my certification to the gate

guard, I was let out of the gates.

The stone bridge was about 300 meters long and had six beautiful arches that stretched from end to end. Could the width of the bridge hold three carriages? There were a lot of people coming and going, most of them entering and leaving a carriage. This might be a transportation hub.

After crossing the bridge, the calcutta mountain range could be seen on my right and the the entrance to the forest in front of me. On the left side was a grazing field, as animals are relaxing behind a fence on that side. There were cows, sheep, and even horses. There was also another field spread out too. The rydell river flow into the forest upstream, but the river was quite open.

It was impossible for me to hunt near the the base of the calcutta mountains because of the large crowd around that area. I turn off the highway, and start moving in the southwest direction. I lost sight of the rydell river as I carried on.

The density of the surrounding trees grows to the point were sunlight was blocked out, making it difficult to see. Unlike the forest at the foot of the wild dragon mountain range, the thickness of each tree wasn't much, but there was only a narrow amount of space between them. I wouldn't be able to swing my two-handed sword here. No, I could swing it, but I would cut down all the trees around me. In such a place, it might be difficult to catch anything without any traps set up.

I've been seeing small animals for a while now, but they would always disappear into the thicket.

With the tree so tightly packed, it would be difficult to use【Dimensional step】here. I aimlessly wandered around the forest for an hour before I noticed signs of 5 other things heading in my direction. I thought they might be wolves or something because they spread out to surround me as they approached.

However, what emerged was a group of five thieves, that each had a vulgar smile on their face. Their hair was unwashed, they had stubble on their faces, and each carried a dagger in hand.

"Oh, where are you going? Knight-sama, hehehe."

"Tell you what, you can keep you life, if you're willing to give up everything your wearing? A cheap price, isn't it? Hahaha."

"To spot a lone knight in the depths of the forest, our luck must be really good! Hahaha"

So they mocked. They seem to have become careless due to their supposed geological advantage. The eyes of the thieves are clouded with greed, as they appraise me from head-to-toe.

Even if you think I can't draw my sword, it is still too early to become careless. I

used【Dimensional step】to instantly transfer behind the closet thief. Gathering power into my fist, in an instant my punch pulverized the head of the thief. A “paan” sound is heard as bits and pieces of the head flew everywhere, and the thief’s body collapsed. It seems I put too much power behind it. I didn’t think making the head vanish was possible.

It’s like looking at a slow motion video, as the faces of the thieves twist in astonishment. I take the opportunity to hammer my fist into the chins of the two closest by. The jaws of the two were sent flying. Blood spouted from the eyes, ears, and the remains of their mouths, as they sunk onto the ground.

“Mon-Monsterrrrr!!!!!!!!!!”

“Th-That’s not humannn!!!”

The thief that was a little far away showed his back to me. From my position, I cast【Rock Bullet】, and a rock the size of a fist went straight through the fleeing thief’s back. Although a basic spell of a mage, the power was pretty good. The was a large hole in the leather armor the thief was wearing.

That was the fourth one. Thinking so, I looked around my surrounding and spotted the last one swaying between the trees as he fled.

In this dense forest, I couldn’t use【Dimensional step】to catch the thief, that was skillfully dodging trees like a monkey. I had to rely on my physical ability to chase after him.

Even as I push the thicket aside, the thief, who knew this area well, steadily increased his distance by avoiding the trees. To try and close the distance, I started to run in a more open space, when my foot was ensnared by something. I’m taken on a ride, as my foot ,ensnared by a rope, is hoisted into the air by the momentum of a falling rock.

“Ha! You’re a real idiot to fall for such a simple trap!!”

The fleeing thief stopped running and looked back at me, with a proud look on his face.
However the force of gravity on the fallen rock suddenly reverses as the rope snips and flies off in the direction of the of the rising sun. The rope snipped do to me forcibly pulling my ensnared leg.

When I started to run again, another trap was activated. This time it was a wall of spears meant to skewer the prey that activated it. I tackle the wall head on causing the spears to shatter upon contact. Next, a log stake comes flying at me. With one powerful punch, the log explodes and wood chips scatter everywhere, even the connecting ropes have been shredded.

The traps seem to have been placed in the more open areas beforehand. Since its like this, I just have to run through the thicker areas with greater force.

“Hyaaaaaaaaaaa!!! Mon-monsterrrrrr!!”

Seeing me breakthrough all the traps with sheer force caused the thief to run away screaming again. Although his was disturbed, he still slipped between the trees quite nicely.

I chase fiercely from behind. Like a tank I rush straight on, if a tree or rock is in the way it was crushed under the force of my charge.

“Hahaha, where will you go?”

“Ahhhhhhhhhhh!!!”

A strange tension built up as I chased the thief, and a line like an army colonel slipped out of my mouth. The smell of ammonia entered the air, as the crotch of the fleeing thief became wet. He seemed to have pissed himself in fear, but he continued to skillfully flee.

Before long, a cliff around 7-8 meters tall appeared as we cleared the thicket. There was something like a cave in the cliff side, and it was surrounded by a fence to keep out animals.

The cave was apparently the thieves den, but the two guards out front only had vacant expressions.

The man who pissed himself frantically ran towards the lookouts. The lookout were confused by his appearance and had a momentary lapse in judgement. Taking the opportunity, I used【Dimensional step】to approach the men and draw my sword. In an instant the three men were cut down in one stroke. It’s easy to catch up in such an open place.

The 3 bodies were cut diagonally, and that cause blood to dyed the area red and the smell of iron to enter the air.

All of a sudden, voices and footsteps can be heard from within the cave, and they were heading in this direction. Throwing my sack down near the entrance, I grab my sword in both hands and wait for the remaining bandits. I must have come to this world to act as society’s cleaner.

Eventually a well-built bald-headed man came out of the cave carrying an axe.

“Huh! Who the hell are you, bastard!!!”

The bald-headed man sees the sight at the cave entrance and yelled that remark before making a leaping swing with his axe. In that short instant, I covered the distance and thrust my sword into the man’s torso with all my might. Without feeling any resistance, the sword penetrates the stomach and cleaves through the abdomen.

With his body split in two, the bald-headed man grumbles on about some new type of monster, while falling to the ground.

The other thieves watched from behind in a state of shock. When I stepped over the entrails of the object that hit the ground, the others began to brandish their weapons in a state of

panic.

I dodged their attacks effortlessly, and cut them down one by one with a single stroke of my sword. Only three people remained near the entrance of the cave, and do to the size only two people could use weapons freely.

As the last of the thieves sink into the pool of blood, the vicinity became quiet.
More then a dozen bodies were in the cave. A cool wind blows through the area and shakes the leaves, as the scent of blood is carried away. When I swung my sword again, fat droplets of blood flow off, allowing the mysterious blue light to shine through.

I continued to advance into the depths of the cave.

The cave wasn't that big, as I hit a dead end after only traveling 100 meters down the left path. The inner parts of the cave became more like a hall, as there were still lamps lit and signs of people sleeping here.

Among the general goods, I found a wooden strong box. The atmosphere and appearance made it look like a treasure chest.

A considerable amount of gold coins, that the thieves had been saving, was within the chest. If I mixed in the gold coins in my pouch, the amount would probably exceed 500 pieces. They were the size of a 1-yen coin, but they weighted the same as a 500-yen coin. It's quite a lot of weight since there were more than 500 of these coins.

There were also a lot of weapons left behind, so for the time being lets just collect the outstanding ones.

# *Chapter 12「Form of the City」Part 2*

I retrieved my luggage sack from the cave's entrance to throw the weapons and gold coins into it.

Suddenly, a small iron cage in the corner of the cave catches my attention. It remained in the shadows beyond the lamps light, so it went unnoticed till now. When I look inside the cage, I saw a wounded animal glaring back at me.

I brought a lamp over so I clearly make out the animal in the cage. There was a fox inside the cage. No, it was a fox like animal.

From head-to-tail it was around 60 cm, and the tail had the appearance of a dandelion and made up half of its body length. The fox's head had large triangular ears that were pointed up, indicating the it was alert and listening out. There was something like a film on it legs, that left the impression of a flying squirrel.

Under the lamps light, I could see that pale green fur cover its back while the fur on its belly was white.

Without removing its eyes, the creature in the cage let out a quiet growl and blistered its big fluffy tail. The forepaws showed shallow scratches, and the fur around the hind legs were dyed red.

In order to cast healing magic on its wounds, I opened the cage's hatch. However, the pale green fox was cautious, as it showed no sign of leaving the cage. Getting nowhere like this, I extend my hand to the fox inside the cage.

"Gyau!"

The fox let out a small bark before biting at my fingers. I felt no pain thanks to the armor, but I groan a little as the green fox showed no sign of releasing my fingers.

"You know, I'm not that scary……"

While saying the lines of the girl of the valley of the wind, I began to pull the hand, being bitten out of the cage, the green fox coming with it. I don't seem to have a power to calm down animals……

"【Heal】"

When the recovery magic is cast, lights start to emit from my fingers being bitten and seep into the fox's wounds. The basic skill of the priest class. The green fox was surprised by this event, and its fluffy tail spread out as it jumped back. Its big eyes blinked rapidly.

"Kyun?"

It curiously inclined its head to the side before looking back at its previously injured hind leg, and licking the spot were the wound should be. Just like a cat, it then began to lick its forepaws. With its grooming completed, the fox sat down on the spot and stated to wag that fluffy tail back and forth.

It didn't show any signs of running away.

I remembered something I had in my bag. When I took out the dried berries I bought this morning, the green fox's nosed twitched a little before it went motionless. While laughing at the situation, I place a berry on my hand and held it out.

At first it was cautious, but it slowly approached my hand with the berry in it. With a dash the fox took the berry, before retreating back, and started to munch on it at a distance. When it finished eating the berry, it started to tip-toe my way for an other one. After a few more round trip, it just started to eat the berries out of my hand.

Its wariness from a while ago seems to have completely vanished, but I wonder if its all right to treat wildlife like this.

When all the berries are eaten, I started to stroke the head of the green fox, with a wry smile. The little guy seemed to be ticklish as it started to let out small pleasant cries.

Since there was nothing valuable left here, I stood up ready to leave. But as I leave the cave, the little fox came running behind me as fast as its legs allowed. When I stopped walking and turned around, the fox was sitting down waging its fluffy tail.

"Do you wan to come with me?"

I didn't expect an answer, but the green fox let out a "Kyun" sound in response. It was totally showing that it could understand me.

I don't know the name of the fox like creature, but I couldn't bear to simple call it green fox. I rack my brain trying to come up with a name of it.

— Green Fox……

"Oage or Tempuro, sound good?"

When I suggested the names, the fluffy tail appeared to droop. You don't seem to like either of them……

— Green fox……

"Ponta, then."

"Kyun!"

The tail now stood erect and was now swaying.

“Then Ponta, ready to go?”

Ponta let out a yep and started to jump in place, when I asked the question. All of a sudden, wind surrounded Ponta, and after expanding its fur, Ponta started to rise like it was in a invisible elevator.

“Ooooh!?”

I let out a surprised yell, as my eyes became glued to Ponta. It could apparently use wind magic. Otherwise it was impossible for such a rising current to be localized in a cave. Ponta rode the wind all the way until it was high enough to jump on my helmet. Because Ponta was facing me on the way up, its fluffy tail was now blocking my sight. When I tried to move the tail, Ponta rearranged itself so that my field of vision cleared.

I couldn’t deny that this was a fantasy creature, it used magic to fly up there after all…… In my former world, arboreal animals, like the flying squirrel, were only capable of gliding because of how their bodies were built.

I try to calm my excitement, as I hoist my luggage sack over my shoulder and leave the cave.

The remains of the thieves are scatted near the entrance. Since it would be troublesome if this attracted something weird, I used【Flame】to burn them all away. At first Ponta was surprised by the flames, but after a while it returned to waging its tail on top of my helmet.

I only leave the thieves’ den when I’m sure that there was nothing left but ashes.

Because I collected so many war trophies, even if I don’t work for a while I should be just fine.

I silently transferred and walked, until I reached the entrance of the forest.

The leaves of the tree were not covering it, so I could see that that red has already entered the sky. A good amount of time seems to have passed since I entered the forest. I could see the Diento’s city walls in the distance, and the farmland was already empty.

After walking up stream the rydell river for a while, I came across a person standing with their back to me.

They wore a hemp colored cloak, and strands of greenish gold hair escaped from under the hood and fluttered in the wind. The physique is like a human, but a feature different from other humans can be seen. The long pointy ears, clearly visible from this angle, is a racial characteristic often seen in stories and the game.

“This is my first time seeing a Elf.”

A little excited, I used【Dimensional step】to appear behind the elf, and I wound up speaking unintentionally.

The elf jumped away from me when I did this, unsheathing a slender sword in the process, and glared back at me with sword in hand and a scowl on their face.

The greenish gold hair could not be compared to the sharp green eyes that observed me. The body was on the slender side, but was wrapped in firm light armor. The guard-less sword pointed in my direction was also steady in his hand. The demeanor and atmosphere were totally different from the thieves from earlier. With a single glance I understood that a great warrior was before me.

“Who are you?”

The elf man was immediately alert and had fallen into a fighting stance. Their voice was a little low, but it was clear that the person was trying to create some openings. However, the eyes of the man seem to be fixed on one point. Their line of sight was focused on Ponta, who was on the top of my head……?

I had questions for the man, but I should responded first.

“Arc. A traveler. I unintentionally called out because this is the first time I’ve seen an elf.” There was still doubt in their eyes, but the swords point was lowered a little.

“…… A human being? A vento vulpix became attached to a human……”

“? Vento?”

“…… Its common name is fluffy fox. Its the sprite beast sitting on your head…… They typically live in packs, how’d you tame it?”

“Wow, its a sprite? Ponta is”

On my head, Ponta let out a strange cry, yet remained stuck on there. The elf looked at the absurd situation with amazement.

“It’s not a sprite, its a sprite beast. Think of it as a animal that possess the power of an elemental sprite. Is such a thing unknown? Is the inside of that magnificent armor empty?”

I was called a fool by this man, but that can’t be helped. Do to my circumstances, there is no way that I would know the ecosystem.

But this armor is not empty, it’s full of bones—.

“I’m sorry. This is the first sprite beast I’ve seen. I found it after it was caught and injured by thieves, and I freed it. It became emotionally attached after I healed it and feed it a little……”

“Bullshit, even a common spirit beast’s wariness is so high that they won’t take to members of the elf race. Are you saying that there are oddballs everywhere?……”

The man said so as he sheathed his sword, and covered it and his elf ears with his cloak.

An oddball, I have a feeling he was looking down on me when he said that, but that can't be the case right?

"So, what are you doing in such a place? I haven't seen any elves in the city, ～are you heading there now?"

The cloaked elf let out an amazed sigh.

"Are you truly a human? Humans are people who hate and fear those different or better than themselves. We elves live long lives and generally have high magical capabilities. Even though we signed a treaty with the Rhoden kingdom, I would become a target for hunting if the public noticed me. The forest people seem to sell for a exaggerated amount of gold."

The eyes under the hood were filled with anger and hatred.

Officially it might be illegal to hunt elves in this country. However, it seems that the prohibition was not being enforced properly. You only need to look into his eyes to image want horrors he has seen.

Even if you call it hunting, it didn't mean killing. The elves wouldn't have needed to enter into such a barbaric treaty, that prohibited the act by feudal law, if there were not people willing to pay a lot of money to subdue them. There's probably a rumor that elf blood can cure all sickness, or they are probably traded as slaves…… Then the reason this guy is near the city is—

"The liberation of elven slaves from the city—"

When I muttered so, the elf had a dangerous and cautious look in his eyes.

"Hmm, I'm not saying anything to a human. I was to meet with a group of elves here……"

While shrugging his shoulders and letting out a sign, the anxious situation was denied.

"Can you even trust the words of a human—"

"Kyun Kyun!"

The hardening of the elf's voice and his attempt to reach for his sword, caused Ponta to let out a sharp cry.

When the elf saw this, he stopped and removed his hand from his sword.

"Shit. Some say that a person bound to a sprite beast are connected by their hearts. Don't forget the words I spoke a while ago.

Saying so, the man walked into the forest at a fast pace, and I eventually lost sight of him.

In the end, I didn't even hear the elf's name—.

I though it was my chance to interact with other species in a different world, but the negative evaluation of humans made that quite difficult.

Well, I hope we came meet again. Since elves are being imprisoned in the city, I will collect information for him should we meet again.

Thinking that, I once again started to walk in the direction of the city,

The city walls were illuminated by the sunset like yesterday. However unlike yesterday, the walls looked like a screen that covered up peoples' greed.

# *Chapter 13「Just Passing By」Part 1*

Past the vast forest that was located east of Diento, the first rays of the sun illuminated the city walls. Signs of activity could be noticed as the city quietly awakened.

At the heart of Diento was a castle owned by the Marquis. Inside, an elderly man was holding his head in his hands.

With white hair that reached his back along with a white mustache on his face, the master of the castle was this stout man, Marquis Triton of Diento.

"Why is it that..? Didn't the report say that two giant basilisks appeared near Rubierute? Shouldn't the presence of such monsters have thrown the territory into considerable disorder?"

The reason Triton's head was bowed was due to the report that his spy in Rubierute had delivered this morning.

In the report, one of the two basilisks had apparently been subdued by a group of adventurers. After that, said adventurers teamed up with one hundred and fifty soldiers to subdue the second one. However, the five-man adventurer party and the soldiers sent as scouts were said to have suffered heavy losses when they attempted to overcome the second basilisk. The main force, on the other hand, received only minor casualties.

"Well, Messenger-dono from the East said that the technique was still quite experimental, and that I shouldn't expect much from the hands of the monster tamers… Although, for one of them to have been defeated by a random group of adventurers, I must be cursed with terrible luck. If the soldiers had to deal with the two basilisks simultaneously, then more than twice the number of people would've fallen; a good amount of damage would've been dealt."

As Triton said this, a man with a pale face who seemed to be nervous let out a sigh. His hands moved to smooth his hair, hiding the parts of his head where the hair was thin.

He was the Consul of Diento, Cyrus Dorman.

"There's no way for them to have had thirty shields made from mythril, which possesses a high level of magic resistance…" Triton muttered resentfully.

"As for this report, concerning the bait for the capture of the "commodity'' set by our liaison in town…It seems that the bait wasn't taken, nor were they even able to meet with the other party. While the amount is fine for now, they are also running low on the bait. If no other measure is immediately taken, without a person skilled in capturing spirit beasts, it will be difficult to capture them."

Upon hearing the report, Triton face became even more bitter. The number of things that

hadn’t been going well recently had only increased, and the built-up frustration caused him to angrily pull at his hair.

“Damn it! The next one! Their base should be in the forest at the base of the Calcutta mountain range. Have they contacted us yet?!”

“The forest extends a great distance from north to south, so to determine the exact location of their base is a bit… And since it’s difficult for a large subjugation unit to go through the area, it’s unlikely for them to have been subdued. However, if a powerful monster were to come down from the mountains… it would be difficult to speculate what would happen.”

“Contact the liaison again and tell him that we will be changing clients if the bait isn’t stocked up! The act of capturing sprite beasts in and of itself isn’t even against the law!! Cyrus, look for a new trading partner to secure more bait!”

“Is it alright? Isn’t there a chance that they might threaten to expose our deeds to the Capital by passing the information through the peddlers?”

Cyrus had an anxious look on his face as he protested, but Triton seemed to think that having a band or two of bandits threatening him would be nothing more than a small annoyance.

He even crudely refuted it.

“Hmph! When it comes to trash of such level as bandits, you simply have to overwhelm them with military might!! Not to mention the fact that crushing them would really generate some good publicity. Hahaha.”

Triton’s belly shook disgustingly as he laughed, and Cyrus took that as his signal to leave and quietly exited the room.

---

At the sound of the morning bell, I woke up on a bed inside the inn.

Ponta had her head buried under the blanket, leaving only the sight of her fluffy green and white tail. Sometimes, while moving her mouth, she would let out a small squeal from the depths of her throat, as if she was eating something delicious in her dreams.

Although she had the appearance of an omnivorous fox, she prefered eating nuts and berries over meat.

I woke Ponta by scratching behind her ear, leading to one of her hind legs kicking out. Her jaws opened wide and let out a big yawn. With a jump, she leapt from my shoulder to her usual spot on top of my head. This fluffy fox seemed to like high places.

While Ponta was riding on my head, I draped a large black cloak over my armor. I bought it yesterday when I saw it at a street vendor’s stand. While it would also conveniently cover

my showy armor, I bought it primarily because it's quite suitable for covert operations.

However, while the flashiness of the armor may be covered up, the black cloak paired with the helmet made for a strange combination. If viewed from the side, I imagine that I could pass for a certain person named Vader.

Although I would no longer have people staring at me due to my luxurious armor, I think I would end up attracting attention for another reason entirely.

I called out to the uncle cooking in the kitchen behind the bar as I left. Since this place only served food at night, it's necessary for me to get breakfast from the street stalls.

There were many street vendors in town, with each one soliciting potential customers in a lively manner. While I was walking, my vision was suddenly covered by a fluffy tail.

Did Ponta find something of concern? This seemed to happen whenever I pass something that she wanted. Ponta's eyes would become locked towards a certain direction, and my vision would be filled with only her tail.

I adjusted Ponta back to her proper position on my head before heading in the direction of the stall that caught her interest. It seemed that the stall sold her favorite kind of nuts. The husks were a light brown color, and between the cracks, green nuts could be seen. They looked like pistachios.

"Kyun!"

She seemed to be pleading for me to buy some. I handed five copper coins over to the saleslady and and received a small sack of nuts in return. I peeled the shells off and fed Ponta two or three nut at a time, resulting in her squealing happily as she chewed on them. The shells from the eaten nuts fell to the ground, only to be crushed under my feet as I walked by.

For the past few days, I'd been strolling around the city with Ponta on top of my head.

I checked all over town, but I had yet to find any information about the enslaved elves implied by that male elf. In all honesty, since I had no idea where the elves could be and since I couldn't simply ask around about it, we'd just been aimlessly wandering around the town…

In addition, since the imprisonment and sale of elves was illegal, in order to engage in this lucrative business, both the vendor and the customers must possess quite the amount of power behind them.

If that's the case, rather than the general area of the town, the nobles' district located near the feudal lord's mansion seemed most suspicious. It had a large number of guards with very little pedestrian traffic, making it hard for a person to sneak around there.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not compelled by any sense of justice in particular. Although it

might be imprudent of me, the truth was that I was simply killing some spare time. Without any sort of purpose, I would've likely shut myself up inside my room at the inn and simply played with Ponta all day.

Anyway, I hadn't even particularly thought about what I'd do if I had found the captured elves. Since I was trying to be inconspicuous, I think I would secretly help if there's a chance for me to do so.

When I thought about how the elves of this world were being unjustly persecuted, I was left with an indescribable feeling.

Though I had yet to see one, do beast people also exist in this world? Judging from the tone of that elf, if they did, then they might be persecuted in a similar fashion as the elves…

While having such thoughts, before I knew it, I found myself in front of the Adventurer's Guild. Though it had only been a few days, it felt like a lot of time had passed.

Aimlessly walking around the city any further probably won't provide great results. I entered the building, thinking I could try looking over the request board after my long absence.

Several adventurers were scattered around choosing their own request from the board. I went up to it as well and looked around for any interesting requests.

All of a sudden, something caught my eye. A search for missing people.

The contents were as follow: Find the group of people who did not return after going into forest upstream from the Rydell River. It has already been five days after the time they were supposed to return.

The forest, which stretched from the base of the Wind Dragon Mountain Range to the Rydell River, was commonly known as the Wind Dragon Forest. The forest around Rata village was also part of the Wind Dragon Forest. The forest that surrounded the northeastern base of the mountain range seemed to be vast in scale as well.

However, on the other side of the Rydell River, the name of the forest was changed, even though they both shared the same mountain range. Names such as "Forest of the Elves" or "Lost Forest" were given. People have said that, past the river, a vast forest was spread.

There were rumors of a strong monster that ran rampant inside the forest. A number of elves were also said to have been living there.

However, I currently had no intention of taking up the request.

It was a request that doesn't reward you unless you brought back the missing parties or proof of their death. This is the type of task that would be put in the back of people's minds once they found another request. I heard that experienced adventurers would teach the rookies regarding the potential gains of a request using examples such as this.

Nevertheless, I could take this opportunity to carefully map out the river upstream.

I left the guild, and made my way to the eastern gate, which was facing the direction of the Wind Dragon Forest. Unlike the southern and northern gates that had caravans regularly passing through them, this gate was much smaller in comparison: It had only about the width of one carriage. Furthermore, the eastern gate was on the outskirts of the city's red-light district. Not only were the roads narrow, but they were also filled with strange shops and suspicious alleyways. While there weren't a lot of pedestrians during the day, after the sun had set, the streets would be crowded with women attempting to bring men into their stores.

Because I wanted to avoid troublesome things, I decided to keep away from this part of the city at night. Moreover, with my body the way it was now, even if I visited one of the shops, it would be pointless…

I left through the eastern gate, walked over the two wooden bridges, and made my way upstream on the right side of the Rydell River. To the east was the Wind Dragon Forest that stretched on for twenty kilometers. However, with【Dimensional step】, I could cover that distance in less than five minutes.

When I entered the forest, Ponta started to wag her tail happily. Was the light-green fur a trait developed to live in the forest, after all? If there was a group of fluffy foxes in this forest, maybe Ponta would want to return to them. I ventured deeper into the forest feeling a little lonely at the thought.

The inside of the forest wasn't very dark; I was able to see pretty well, but the tall undergrowth made each footstep difficult to discern. To my right was a sheer cliff, and underneath it was the Rydell River. The sound of the water flowing echoed in the forest. Combined with the singing of the birds and the rustling of the leaves from the wind, it made for an amazingly tranquil atmosphere. The fear of monsters meant that few people ever got to experience such a place.

I continued my hike upstream while enjoying the patches of sunlight filtered through the foliage and the sound of the water. Suddenly, a patch of brown fur appeared in the tall grass.

"Kyu~n…"

Ponta let out a miserable cry as she moved from my head to hide at the nape of my neck. From the side, it looked like I was some auntie wearing a mink scarf.

The fur patch, which was about the size of a large bear, began to move. The sound of something crunching resounded throughout the area. When I noticed this, the brown bear stood up on its hind legs.

But the bear that stood up was vastly different compared to the bears that I knew of.

While its body was that of a bear, it had the head of a wolf. Furthermore, it had long

straight ears like those of a donkey. While its ears twitched, the beast glared at me. The mouth that was dripping with blood let out a vicious roar. Was it angry that its meal was disturbed?

A cool metallic sound rang out as I unsheathed my sword. The wolf-headed bear glared at me while measuring the distance between us, and slowly approached.

Victory goes to the one who makes the first move!

I transferred beside the monster with【Dimensional step】and quickly stabbed my sword into its abdomen from the side. Then, I instantly changed to another location. There was no need to use any other skills at this point, as I had already delivered a fatal blow.

“GAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!”

The combination of losing sight of its prey and the sharp pain it felt caused the beast to frantically swing its fore-paws in a reckless manner. However, more blood flowed from the stab wound in its abdomen with every move it made during its rampage. While standing at a safe distance from the wolf-headed bear, I waited for the creature to weaken on its own.

About ten minutes later, the creature fell onto the ground and began to gasp for air. Though it was still breathing, it had already ceased to be any sort of threat.

Ignoring the wolf-headed bear, I headed towards the place that caught my attention. It was a small clearing, the place where the creature was having its meal.

Although it was damaged considerably with several bite marks along with various bones that had been crunched, I recognized it immediately.

It was a human being.

However, this lump of flesh, which was once a human, didn’t have any of the items necessary for proper identification. While I examined the nearby thicket, Ponta, who had recovered from the encounter with the wolf-headed bear, let out a cry from her usual position.

“Kyuun!”

When I searched the bush that caught Ponta’s attention, I found a human head. The damage wasn’t particularly bad; it was still possible to make out the general facial features. However, it was impossible to tell if this was the one of the missing people mentioned in the request.

I also didn’t want to carry this severed head back with me. While I could describe the face to the people at the Adventurer’s Guild, they would probably ask to see it themselves for verification.

All of a sudden, I noticed something weird. The place where the neck was severed was very

clean. That wouldn't be the case if this person was attacked by wild animals. Or perhaps, out there, a monster capable of making such clean cuts existed?

Could it be that the missing group was attacked and killed by bandits? In fact, as there weren't any weapons or even any luggage around the dead body, I felt the possibility of that was quite high. No one in their right mind would enter a dangerous forest empty handed, after all.

That being said, could their hideout be nearby?

When I observed my surroundings, I saw bloodstains near a patch of undergrowth inside the clearing. Although the blood had already hardened into a discolored black, I decided to let it guide me deeper into the forest.

The trail led me to the banks of the Rydell River. It continued past the rocks and gravel near the river edge before stopping. This part of the river was more upstream, but it was comparatively much wider. As a result, it was also shallower. It seemed that this person managed to escape by crossing from the other side of the river.

The forest on the other side belonged to the elves. Were they responsible for the disappearances? However, it was unlikely that the elves would be living in the immediate vicinity of the river. It was too close to where people would enter and leave the forest. Although it would be difficult to find elves here, considering that it's the outskirts of a forest that few people were willing to enter, it could make for a suitable hideout for the bandits.

"Hmm, are you up for a bit of scouting, Ponta?"

"Kyun!"

# *Chapter 14「Just Passing By」Part 2*

When I called out to Ponta who was quenching her thirst by the riverside, she made her way towards me while barking cheerfully. While I waited with one of my knees slightly out, she used it to leap up to my shoulder before finally settling herself in her usual position on top of my head. I took out and peeled some of the pistachios from my bag, resulting in her happily wagging her tail.

After walking through the shallow section of the river, I entered the forest on the opposite shore.

From this point forward, I was in the domain of the elves. However, the atmosphere in the forest was anything but somber. Rather, with the sunlight filtering through the treetops, it felt quite pleasant.

However, there were no bloodstains on this side.

Instead, there were signs that someone had tread upon this area. Was it possible that person was wounded during the crossing of the river, resulting in the blood only appearing on the opposite shore?

This might mean that the supposed bandits considered this area to be dangerous.

If that's the case, then even if I carefully searched this area, it would be unreasonable for me to be able to find any additional signs to pursue. It seemed that I could only steadily search on foot.

Since time wasn't really an issue, I leisurely walked through the forest with Ponta. Occasionally, a certain type of nut would catch her eye; after using wind magic to retrieve them from the tree, she would enjoy them on top of my head.

Before long, the light of the sun began to to fade away, gradually dyeing the forest a crimson red. It was at this time that we found ourselves before what appeared to be a mountain trail. The width was at most able to accommodate a single carriage. The undergrowth was cut to the extent where it could barely be considered as a road.

The road extended to the northeast and the southwest direction.

Since it was already getting dark, I headed in the southwestern direction, towards where the forest's exit might be. From my head, Ponta's sleepy yawns could periodically be heard.

Farther down the path, I heard the sound of weapons clashing with one another.

I left the trail, moving quietly through the thickets as I approached the source of the noises. There was a wagon with a small group of people next to it, their weapons drawn and their faces covered with menacing looks.

The people surrounding the wagon had the same discreetly colored cloak, their weapons and shields raised in formation in order to protect it. They were clearly exceedingly different compared to a normal gang of bandits with mismatched equipment.

The wagon parked a little ways behind them was covered with a cloth canvas, hiding its contents. However, I felt signs of life in the interior of the carriage; there must be people hidden inside.

A slim man beside the wagon drew his sword, but unlike the guards in front of him, the sword trembled in his hands as he pulled it from his waist.

The corpses of three men covered with arrows surrounded the wagon. They seemed to be victims of a surprise attack.

Among the men with increased fervor near the front, a man who had a good build let out a pained moan before he fell to the ground. As he fell, I caught sight of the assailant's figure retracting her sword before vigilantly observing her surroundings.

From one glance at the beautiful woman who stood there while wielding a slender sword, it was clear that she wasn't human.

Her lilac colored skin was crystal smooth; her long hair white as snow. Her pointed ears complemented her sharp eyes, which glowed with a strange gold in the darkening forest. Compared to the elf I had previously seen, her ears were also shorter.

She was dressed in a long-sleeved dress with a modest length hem that allowed for great maneuverability. A leather corset served as protective gear, while a grey cloak fluttered in the wind behind her.

Her demeanor was reminiscent of a veteran warrior.

However, a stunning feminine charm radiated from the body wrapped in plain clothing. The fabric at her chest threatened to burst open at any moment under the pressure from their overwhelming mass. Underneath, a narrow waist accentuated her graceful legs and toned buttocks.

If one was able to deprive their eyes of her beautiful figure for even a little while, then they would be able to notice the flashing silver sword in her hand that fiercely struck out, felling one hefty men after another.

Occasionally, there were men who tried to surround her, but they would retreat after receiving the arrows shot from a position farther behind her.

While using the thick branches of the large tree as a foothold, and the trunk as a substitute shield, the archer, who had the same features as the person I saw near Diento, continually fired arrows.

With emerald-tinted blonde hair, jade-colored eyes, and long, pointed ears along with a

slender build, he was undoubtedly an elf. However, this elf appeared to be a different person from the one I saw near the city.

The two attacked a group that numbered about twenty. They were skilled enough in battle that they easily overcame the number disadvantage. As Ponta and I quietly observed from a bush, wondering whether, after a few minutes, the battle would conclude, I heard a man swear near the back of the group. Then, he started running towards the wagon.

After the man tore off the canvas covering the wagon, he pointed his sword towards one of the attackers while screaming at her.

“Woman!! Surrender obediently!! Otherwise, I’ll cover their bodies with holes!!! That elf back there, too!!”

With bulging veins and saliva spraying out of his mouth, the man shouted.

His sword was directed towards the iron cage inside the wagon where four children were locked up. With golden hair, emerald eyes, and long ears, they were all elves.

The children, probably fearful of the sword pointed at them, let out muffled sobs through their gags. At the same time, more tears gathered at the corners of their eyes.

When the woman stopped her sword in consideration of the threat, the men around her let out sighs of relief. Simultaneously, they began to gradually shrink their encirclement.

“Damn–! The shameless human race!!! …Instead of submitting to you and enduring the humiliation for the rest of our lives, the people of the forest would rather die proudly!!!”

Along with her yells, the tip of the sword rose back up. A more intense hatred and anger gleamed from her eyes. The pressure from the dark aura now surrounding her caused the approaching men to hesitate.

The elf situated on the tree pondered on what he should do and didn’t raise his bow. In this situation, it was obvious that some of the elven hostages would become sacrifices.

It might be the nature of a helpless man to want to get closer, even if it’s only by a little, to that beautiful woman with lilac-colored skin.

“Hmm, looks like you’re in a tight spot. Allow me to lend a hand.”

In this volatile atmosphere, after turning pulling Ponta from the top of my head and turning her into a scarf for safety, I approached the man next to the wagon while calling out in an innocent tone.

For a moment, only the surrounding air rustled.

If a silver knight who wore a black cloak suddenly emerged from the thicket, of course anyone would find it suspicious. The man who threatened her earlier seemed to be lost in

thought.

“Lend a hand? Lend…” With a confused expression that seemed to be pondering something, he muttered under his breath.

I closed the distance towards the off-guard man who couldn’t seem to make a decision.

Although I could have simply transferred to shorten the distance, I was hesitant to thoughtlessly reveal it in front of so many people. It was a delicate situation, as it was still unknown whether or not defeating the kidnappers would create the opportunity to form a friendly relationship with the forest people.

“Al-alright! I will reward you generously if you capture that dark elf!!! However, be sure to capture her alive!!!”

“What!! What on earth are you thinking!!! We can’t trust such a suspicious person; are you mad!!!”

When the man, whose patterns of thinking must have been completely faulty, called out such words as if they were good ideas, one of the members of his group protested. As expected, there was still at least one person who was able to think rationally in this situation.

“Annoying, so annoying, just shut up!!! You lot are so incompetent that you couldn’t even overcome a single woman!!! Capture her quickly!! We can’t let such a precious rare species get away!!!”

This group appeared to be capable, so how did such an incompetent person get mixed in? I wonder who the leader in charge of this group of kidnappers is? Although, at this point, I suppose it doesn’t matter…

So, she’s apparently a dark elf, huh… Her features do differ considerably from that of an elf. Although, in the game, dark elves had long ears instead, along with red eyes and dark brown skin; their features in this world seemed to be quite different.

Furthermore, considering they were a rare species, their numbers were probably few.

While thinking of such irrelevant thoughts, I closed the distance towards the incompetent man to a short degree. Even with my full-body armor, thanks to my current greatly enhanced body, I was able to cover the distance in the blink of an eye.

I drew my sword and slashed at his arm – the one he had used to brandish his sword earlier. As if he couldn’t understand what had just happened, he had a dumbfounded expression on his face as he took his final breath. After the upper body began to fall, the flaccid lower half hit the ground and spilled its filth onto the well-tailored pants.

Everyone was stunned at the sight they had just witnessed. However, in the next moment, the dark elf regained her senses.

While everyone else was still distracted, she took the opportunity to cut down three men.

A man tried to regain his stance, but before he was able to, I dashed forward and cleaved him in two with an overhead swing, as if I was preparing to fillet a fish. Pure panic and fear took over the men as screams filled the air.

Arrows from above, courtesy of the elf in the tree, picked off all those who tried to escape.

In a matter of minutes, stillness descended upon the clearing, with only the sounds of the insects and the rustle of the leaves breaking the silence.

# *Chapter 15「I Received an Assigned Request」*

The heavy stench of blood and entrails permeated the surrounding air. With a single swing, my sword released a cloud of blood droplets, and regained its previous pale-blue luster. I then sheathed the sword, concealing it beneath my black mantle.

Right when I took a step towards the carriage, a sharp female voice resounded from behind.

“Stop right there!! Don’t make any strange movements!!”

Looking behind me, I saw the female dark elf giving me an intimidating glare with her sword pointed in my direction. Behind her, the male elf descended from the tree and approached cautiously with his bow drawn.

“I’m not a suspicious person. I happened to be nearby–”

When I tried to give an explanation, I ended up speaking the classic lines of a suspicious person. I lamented in my heart how this only made me appear all the more suspicious.

“Quiet! Stay where you are! Donnaha, search for the key!”

However, she didn’t seem to want to hear any of it. After giving orders to the male elf, she took up a position separating me from the children on the carriage. The man called Donnaha silently nodded in reply, and began to search the bodies for the key to the cage where the members of their race were imprisoned.

Even while the female dark elf was periodically checking on her partner’s progress, she unwaveringly kept her sword aimed towards me. At that time, Ponta sensed the calmness after the quiet conclusion of the battle. She uncoiled her body, which had been wrapped around my neck, and hopped back to her usual spot before letting out a cry.

“Kyun!”

At the sight of Ponta, the dark elf’s golden eyes widened in surprise. She lowered her sword slightly before calling out to me.

“No way, is that a fluffy fox? How did a human manage to tame a spirit beast?!”

Just like the elf I had previously met, she was astonished at Ponta’s presence. It seemed that it was quite a rare occurrence.

“The elf I met the other day was also surprised. I simply healed this fellow’s injuries and gave her some food… Henceforth, I seemed to have gained her favor.”

I retrieved the item bag that I had left in the bushes before I had entered the battle, and

pulled out the bag of pistachio-like nuts from within. When I placed the contents of the bag on my palm, Ponta smoothly left my head for the nuts on my hand. She skillfully removed the shells before stuffing them in her mouth, eating with great relish.

After the dark elf witnessed this scene, she retrieved her malicious intent and sheathed her sword. Although she still stayed vigilant, she seemed willing to listen to my circumstances now.

"An elf you met the other day?"

"I met him near the town of Diento. He also seemed to want to liberate the enslaved elves in the city."

Although the elf said that he didn't talk to any humans, as he seemed to share a common goal with the two here, I mentioned him. With a flash of recognition, she quickly asked a follow up question; her wariness seemed to have lessened slightly.

"You met Danka?! No way…"

"No, he didn't explicitly tell me these things…"

For now, I interrupted her suspicions with an explanation. It's still questionable whether they would believe me.

All of a sudden, the male elf who had been searching for the key, Donnaha, called out.

"Ariane, I found it."

After his announcement, Donnaha made his way towards the iron-barred window of the wagon and unlocked the bolt. With a heavy metallic sound, the door of the cage opened, and the four children exited, each bearing various injuries. One of them was dragging their injured leg.

In order to earn some points, and further my plan of creating an amiable relationship with the elves, I offered the usage of a part of my abilities to the dark elf Ariane.

"If there are any injuries, I can use healing magic to treat them. If you're fine with that, I will see to the children's injuries."

"Aren't you a human? To be helping elves…what's your goal?"

"Not all humans are hostile to the elves…it's merely that. After all, can't you find oddballs pretty much anywhere?"

After I replied, she stared for some time at me and Ponta, who was sitting on my hand, before she eventually, in silence, made a small gesture. It seemed that I've been given permission.

So as to not frighten the children, I brought Ponta, who was still eating the nuts, over with

me. The children were indeed frightened, as one of them even hid behind Donnaha. I got down on one knee and lowered Ponta before the children.

The little girl with a wounded leg, which she might have gotten during her failed escape attempt, had a tense face.

I gently brought my hand closer and casted【Heal】. A soft light engulfed her leg, converging on her injury, closing the wound in a matter of seconds. When she saw that her wound had disappeared, her tense expression broke into a small smile.

“Heh, to be able to use healing magic without an incantation…that’s impressive.”

Ariane remarked in admiration. Apparently, the chant of the magic was usually necessary if one wanted to cast a spell. While there was a cooldown time in the game for recasting spells, you could instantly activate magic without the need of an incantation. Anyway, it was good that being able to use chantless magic wasn’t unheard of in this world.

The rest of the children decided to put their trust in me after seeing that the girl’s injuries had recovered, and gathered around to have me treat their injuries as well. After I administered【Heal】on the remaining three children, they all thanked me in a small voice.

“Ariane, attached to the necks of the children are the『Magic-Eating Collars』. They can’t use any magic in this state; what should we do?”

As Donnaha had observed, there was a black metallic collar secured around the neck of each child. A complex pattern was engraved on each of them.

“『Magic-Eating Collar』?”

I questioned the unfamiliar term.

According to Donnaha, it was a magic item that consumed the mana of the person wearing it to the point where performing magic was very difficult. It was said that for elves wearing such collars, using their race’s prided spirit magic was impossible.

“Ariane, you’re meeting up with Danka after this. At that time, I would have to escort the four children whose magic are sealed by myself, where it won’t be truly safe until we arrive at a nearby village… How are we going to do this…”

While Donnaha looked at the recovered children with a thoughtful expression on his face, Ariane abruptly turned to me with a question.

“Hey, you. Armor guy! If you can use healing magic, then you must have the power of a shrine maiden or a shaman, right? Does that mean you would be able to remove the curse on the collars?”

A female-exclusive shrine maiden class existed in the game, but there wasn’t a shaman occupation. However, when I thought about what she was asking, a priest based class might

be able to do it. If I'm not mistaken, the intermediate level Bishop class should have the【Anti Curse】skill, and the advanced level Pope class should have the【Holy Purification】skill.

【Anti Curse】was a magic skill that allowed the removal of curse attributes from both items and one's status, while【Holy Purification】was a magic skill that, in addition to removing all of the curses, also dealt a large amount of damage to the undead species.

"It's not Armor guy; it's Arc. More or less, it's possible to remove the curse with the use of magic…but I don't know whether there might be side effects in doing so."

After all, I've never used the spell in actuality… With that in mind, I placed my hand above one of the children's collars and casted【Anti Curse】. A complex magic formation appeared above my palms before being sucked into the collar. At that time, it made a crystal clear sound as it easily broke apart, falling to the ground.

The child who was now free from his collar patted around his neck for a while before offering me a bright smile.

"Thank you! Armor Oji-san!!"

Yep, there's no doubt that with this I gave off a good impression to the elves. I rejoiced secretly at the thought. The other children who were watching approached me. I arranged them to stand in a row and released the collars' curse sequentially.

After seeing that the children were safely released from their collars, Donnaha let out a sigh of relief. It was probably because things had calmly settled down, but he soon began to scold the children.

"Now…all of you, weren't you told not to leave the village without permission from your parents and the chief ? That it was unsafe."

"…Sorry. A spirit was distressed and kept calling out 'help me, help me', and I thought that I should…"

As one of the children got watery eyes while explaining their circumstances, Ariane came in with a question.

"A distressed spirit? Where was it?"

"When I went to the place the spirit had pointed out, I saw an injured fluffy fox trapped there… It had been captured by humans, so I figured that I should help…"

At those words, the eyes of both Ariane and Donnaha turned towards me, creating an atmosphere where it felt like the good image I had managed to create earlier was instantly reduced. There's nothing to do here except to explain, and clear up this unexpected misunderstanding.

"Don't misunderstand, I helped Ponta here who was captured in a bandit stronghold. Surely

you can't believe that I had something to do with the luring out and capture of the children?"

"–Oh well, I guess so. Fluffy foxes, known for their high level of wariness, would never become emotionally attached to someone who injured it…"

Ariane muttered while shrugging her shoulders, her arms crossed beneath her ample bosom. Donnaha nodded in agreement, and with that, the piercing gazes aimed towards my direction disappeared. It seemed that I was able to resolve the misunderstanding properly.

While I was thinking that, I saw the elf children surrounding Ponta quietly stroking her thick fur. It was said that the foxes had strong wariness and that they rarely became emotionally attached to people. However, with such a scene before their eyes, anyone would begin to doubt themselves.

"Well, I will deliver the kids to the closest village first. We'll depart momentarily; nightfall is imminent. Are all of you able to use spirit magic to at least protect yourselves?"

When Donaha prompted them, the children gave an energetic response before stepping through the thickets into the forest. Even these small children were able to use spirit magic. It seemed that in order protect yourself in this dangerous forest, you needed to possess high combat capabilities.

"Be careful, Donnaha. Did you say that your name was Arc? If you're free, how about giving me some help? The cleanup of that…"

While speaking, she gestured with her shapely chin to the area surrounding the wagon where the sight of the scattered remains of the armed group could be seen.

Hmm, I guess, compared to if you were to do it alone, the time required to finish would be halved. Besides, being able to be ordered around by such a beautiful Onee-san is a considerably hard-to-come-by experience.

As we gathered the ruffians' remains to one place, I helped myself to the money from their pockets, as well as the weapons that seemed to have market value. After seeing this, Ariane's well-featured eyebrows knitted together in a scowl.

"To do such a thing as stealing the possessions of the dead… It's a mystery why a fluffy fox took to a person like you."

"In human society, no matter what, one cannot survive without money. Moreover, the expenses while traveling are numerous; there's no need pass on an opportunity such as this… Do the elf race not use currency?

Hearing my question, Ariane scolded, "Elves also have enough gold coins!"

Apparently, the basic system of bartering was commonplace within elf villages, while gold coins were used for external transactions.

Rather than using a gold alloy for their coins as the humans did, the elves used pure gold instead; it seemed that their coins were worth much more than that of their human counterpart. Ariane proudly spoke about how, after the elves purposely used their gold coins in transactions enough times to be noticed, the large human businesses scrambled to exchange their coins for the elven variety.

I felt a glamorous atmosphere around this voluptuous Onee-san; however, the figure of her proudly narrating was somewhat charming and sweet. Though if I were to say that out loud, intense golden eyes would probably glare at me, so I kept my mouth shut.

Once all the corpses were collected in one spot, Ariane suddenly moved forward and sat down, gesturing for me to follow suit.

When I lowered my body, Ponta turned up at the same time and twisted her body into a position between my legs before also sitting. She seemed to be investigating Ariane's movements as her ears twitched.

『–Become Engulfed by the Earth–』

She held her hands above the ground, and, after a small mutter, the surface of the earth around the corpses immediately began to undulate. In a manner almost as if it was a living creature, the ground began to swallow up the corpses. After a short while, the mountain-like pile of corpses had completely disappeared without a trace.

"I guess with this, by becoming nourishment for the forest, these guys were able to be slightly useful."

As she said this, Ariane brushed off the dirt on her hands and stood up.

Ponta repeatedly scratched with her front paw at where the earth had billowed not long ago, and tilted her head to the side in confusion.

It was a type of magic perfectly suited for the disposal of corpses.

"Hmm, so that was spirit magic. It's the first time that I've seen it being used."

Having only had knowledge about it up to now, you could say that after personally witnessing it in reality, I had a sort of deeply moved feeling.

With the corpse disposal finished, Ariane removed the harnesses of the horses attached to the carriage and smacked their backsides, making them take off. It appeared that we were letting both horses go free.

Only the wagon and the cage inside it remained at the scene of the attack. It might be possible to get a fair amount of money for it, but trying to sell such a thing in town would be conspicuous no matter how you look at it. There's nothing to do except simply leaving it here.

“I have fire and earth spirit magic as my specialties. Oh, I have yet to properly convey my gratitude. You saved us earlier; thank you. I am Ariane. Ariane Glenys Maple.”

She turned around and introduced herself. Along with her long snow-white hair that was coupled with long curled eyelashes, underneath which a pair of golden eyes peeked out, turned towards my direction, there appeared on her full lips an alluring smile. The sex appeal emanating from her body would be enough to drive a previously incompetent man mad with lust.

However, her name seemed somewhat sweet…

“Arc. Merely a traveling adventurer. And sitting there is Ponta.”

“Kyun!”

When I gave a brief introduction, Ponta looked up and voiced a cry. It didn’t seem like it was for a self introduction.

Following Ponta’s line of sight, I saw a large bird with beautiful turquoise feathers approaching this way. When Ariane noticed as well, she looked up at the sky.

After skillfully weaving through the gaps between the trees in its descent, the bird quietly landed on Ariane’s outstretched left arm.

Although slightly smaller than a crow, it was still reasonably large looking at it up close. Its white crest stood up like an ahoge.

“Commonly known as the Whisper Bird, it too is a spirit beast.”

After she briefly explained the name of the bird, its beak opened and it began fluently speaking in a masculine voice.

『Danka found the base of those guys in Diento. Ariane, join up with Danka and rescue our brethren.』

The Whisper Bird closed its beak after only saying that much and tilted its head. Thereupon, Ariane took out a small red nut from a leather pouch attached to her hip, and the Whisper Bird’s beak skillfully bent down to peck at it. After gently brushing the crest atop its head, Ariane began speaking to the bird.

“Donnaha and I have succeeded in the rescue of the four children; he is currently returning to the village. I will join up with Danka shortly.”

After she finished speaking, her left arm was raised slightly overhead. Using its inertia, the Whisper Bird took off, skillfully avoiding each tree’s leaves as it flew into the depths of the forest, disappearing from sight.

It seemed that the bird was similar to a carrier pigeon. Except, one with the ability of a

perfect voice recorder. Using the Whisper Bird's voice from a while ago as basis, I guess her message will be transmitted in the same way.

While looking at my dumbfounded state, Ariane began elatedly laughing at me.

"Is it because it's difficult for humans to tame spirit beasts that you don't know about such a thing? By the way, you said that you were an adventurer, right? How'd you like to be employed by me?"

Ariane threw a provocative look at me while she took out five golden coins from the leather pouch attached to her waist, and made such a proposal.

"Five elven gold coins in advance, and another five afterwards. Not a bad deal, don't you agree?"

Could the Whisper Bird's message earlier be talking about helping with the mission of liberating the elves in Diento? Did the elf from the other day find the whereabouts of the imprisoned elves? If so, my roaming around was truly a wasted effort…

All things considered, why was she offering to hire me…? There seemed to be quite the feud going on between the elves and the humans. Objectively speaking, you wouldn't easily trust an unknown human clad in full body armor, right?

Folding my arms in an effort to appear important, I asked the person in question directly.

"Hmm. Can a human like me be trusted?"

"I don't trust you. The fluffy fox there, Ponta? I only trust that child. Even if a spirit beast partners with a human, it's usually with a small child… For an adult to tame them, that person would either have to be good-natured or habitually empty headed."

Was that an insult that you just let slip? Certainly, I usually don't take troublesome things into consideration, but to say that I have an inclination of living only with instincts…

At my feet, Ponta had her neck tilted to one side in confusion as she looked up at me.

"Hmm, aren't adventurers hired like this?"

"There are rules. Hey!"

She threw the gold coins in her hand in my direction. I easily caught them out of the air.

Unlike this country's gold coins, these were each the size of a hundred-yen coin, with delicate designs engraved on both sides; they were considerably high quality. Just from looking at the gold coins, I could tell that the elves had superior technology compared to humans.

It certainly was made from pure gold; with a glance, one could tell that they were worth more than the human variety.

I deposited the elven gold coins in the money pouch inside my bag.

Well, the mission for rescuing the imprisoned elves was basically one of stealth. Acting out in the open won't do, so the convenient movement method I recently used would come quite in handy.

The elves seemed more trustworthy than the foolish humans; it would be a good idea to strengthen our newly found relationship.

This was my first assigned request as an adventurer; it should work out fine—

# *Chapter 16「Waiting to Infiltrate」Part 1*

"Well then, first, I'm going to join Danka who'd already infiltrated Diento. Follow me.

"About that… Can I suggest something?"

In order to strengthen my relationship with the elves, it might be better to disclose one of my abilities. Besides, this appearance makes covert operations pretty much impossible. However, with the use of【Dimensional Step】that allowed for short-range transfer, slipping into somewhere without being seen wouldn't be anything difficult.

If I was to be in a silver full body armor right in front of the place where the elves would free the prisoners, I would stand out as a target and the possibility of becoming a wanted man, unable to move freely, was very real. That being the case, by using this magic to secretly sneak in, there's no need to worry about being seen by any witnesses during the rescue.

"A suggestion? You're a little too relaxed; before reaching Diento, the forest will already be dark."

As she lightly held down her beautiful white hair that fluttered in the wind, she seemed to be a little doubtful of my intentions.

"Ariane-dono, do you know of transfer magic?"

"…? I know of it, but what does that have to do with anything?"

I saw slight traces of caution spreading in her eyes. Was the topic of transfer magic something that's taboo? But having come as far as this, not saying anything wasn't an option… Preparing myself for the worst, I continued.

"I'm able to use transfer magic; with it, we can immediately arrive at Diento. Infiltrating as well as escaping from the prison should be considerably easier if we incorporate its use into the rescue plan."

"Transfer magic!? No way?! An individual being able to wield the power spoken of in legends?! Even us elves relying on the use of magic tools are barely able to invoke such magic…!!"

Both of her golden eyes widened; her expression was one of obvious shock as she rapidly rattled on. After a while, in a fit of sudden realization, she flusteredly covered her mouth with her hands.

It seemed that while the elves had knowledge of transfer magic, it wasn't the type of thing that could be invoked based on a single person's magic ability. However, by using their magic tools, the elves were able to use transfer magic…and based on the tone earlier, humans didn't seem to possess such tools for transfer magic; otherwise, it might be the case where

they couldn't use them. Looking at her panicked face, the fact that the elves were able to use transfer magic might be a closely-guarded secret.

"Forget what you just heard! No…prove that you are able to use transfer magic. Supposing it's true, we won't reveal it, but you also must promise not to disclose that thing from earlier!"

Her speech and conduct was relentless, with an intensity that didn't allow refusal, demanding from me an immediate reply. In the case where the inimical humans became aware of the existence of super technology that enables the use of things such as transfer magic, the desire for this technology could very well start a war between the two races; it's something to be of concern. Dealing with me knowing the existence of technology can be said to be possible, but…

Having two people mutually share their secrets could certainly give both parties peace of mind.

"…I understand. Regarding the talk about the elves' transfer magic, I promise to keep my lips sealed."

Bombastic words of promise were given to her.

"Good. Well then, shall you show me this transfer magic at once?"

With a flutter of her grey cloak, Ariane stood with her hand against her waist, striking a daunting pose, her gaze prompting action.

Ponta seemed to understand the situation. Invoking wind magic with a cry, she floated to her usual place, clinging to the top of my helmet.

Finishing with the collection of all of my luggage in preparation for departure, I shouldered the bag and called out to Ariane before activating the spell.

"As agreed. Well then, opening a path near the town of Diento.【Transfer Gate】!"

As the spell activated, a three meter wide magic circle emanating bluish-white light emerged, expanding beneath our feet. The day had declined considerably, with the shadows of the lush trees in the forest thickening. A mysterious fantastical light dyed the trees, and all of a sudden, the scenery before my eyes was completely plunged into darkness.

However, in just an instant, realizing that the previous forest landscape had disappeared, we were standing at a completely different location.

With her arms folded, she had a look of utter surprise on her face after seeing the result. Her two golden eyes opened wide as she gazed at all of the surrounding scenery.

Dusk was already approaching, with shades of orchid dyeing the sky. A gently blowing wind swept through the meadow, caressing the grass, and creating a refreshing rustle that tickled

the ears.

A small distance away, there was a stone bridge with six arches, underneath which the flowing Rydell River could be seen. Beyond that point, an unbroken view of the city walls that enclosed Diento presented itself.

“I’m surprised… No, for there to truly be a person capable of using transfer magic without chanting…even now, I feel like I’m dreaming… This certainly is the best power for rescuing my brethren.”

While looking at her surroundings with an appearance of continual admiration, she turned around and gave me a broad smile. She seemed to be honestly pleased that prospect of the upcoming rescue mission was brighter.

“Although it’s a convenient magic, it’s not without any weaknesses. Travelling to a place requires me to have previously gone there, as well as a clear memory of the location. For places with similar scenery such as forests or the interior of a cave, it probably won’t be very successful…”

“Even so, that’s enough! The transfer magic that elves use, in the first place, can’t connect to areas outside of those with certain conditions, not to mention that a large amount of mana has to be expended…”

There seemed to be various restrictions with the use of the elves’ transfer magic; however, even so, the ability was still far superior to the present-day transportation technology.

“Well, I can’t stay surprised forever. Before long, I have to slip into Diento.”

As Ariane announced, pulling herself together, she tugged her hood low over her eyes and completely covered herself with her cloak, wearing it like an outfit, before starting to take steps towards the town of Diento.

As a dark elf, her crystal-smooth lilac colored skin was considerably from that of the normal elves and humans, which made it fairly conspicuous. Without hiding her whole body like this, she would probably be found out instantly.

In my case, since my armor covered up my skeletal body, no one can see it. A little affinity welled up, though her situation was a little different from mine since she had an actual flesh and blood body.

Donning my own black cloak, the luxurious silver armor was completely covered before I started walking behind her, following her lead.

Though dusk was dyeing the town of Diento, as one would expect of a major traffic point, a large number of people in carriages were still crossing the six arched bridge in order to enter the town. At this time, with no one leaving the town, the flow of people moved in one direction.

Crossing over the bridge, we passed through the first gate along with the stream of people until we came up to the second gate. Walking while being fully armed and covered head to toe in a black cloak somehow led to the crowd parting before me. Since it wasn't a particularly troubling thing, I silently advanced towards the second gate.

While showing my adventurer's identification, I spoke up for the fully covered Ariane.

"Behind me is my companion. How much is the entrance tax?"

The gate guard gave Ariane behind me a fleeting glance, showing no particular interest towards the many people trying to enter the town, and opened his mouth, replying in a brusque manner.

"It's 1 sek."

From the leather bag at my waist, I retrieved a silver coin and handed it over to the guard, after which I entered the town together with Ariane.

With the sun already set, light from the scattered lamps shone through the streets, mixing with the overflowing energy from the lively throng. As we weaved our way through the crowd in the plaza before the southern gate, I asked Ariane regarding our next move.

"Well, we've managed to enter Diento, but what do we do next, Ariane-dono?"

"Passing through the gate right after crossing the bridge should exit into a plaza… This is the meeting spot where I'm supposed to wait for Danka. I guess he'll find us here."

With that, she made her way through the surging crowd to a corner in the plaza, her back against the wall before she focused on the crowd of people. Following suit, I leaned against the wall and turned my gaze towards the same crowd.

Danka was the elf that I previously met outside of this town. Last time, in order to hide the elves' distinct long ears, he wore a hood. However, right now I couldn't find anybody fitting that description in my immediate line of sight.

A short time later, someone was approaching in our direction. With a hemp colored cloak, the hood worn low over his eyes, that person walked towards us.

When Ariane also noticed this person, she straightened, separating from the wall before receiving him.

"Ariane, why is this man here?"

Stopping before us, the man in the hemp colored cloak asked Ariane that question in a low voice. The voice was familiar; it was the same as that of the man I met outside the town.

"It's just a little development… This time, I employed an adventurer for a little help."

"Are you serious?!"

Danka's voice was filled with surprise and reproach.

It can't be helped; the act of hiring a self-proclaimed human to rescue elves captured by humans was something that can't be understood.

"To stand around while having this conversation…let's find somewhere to sit down."

After saying so, she quickly left the plaza. Danka must've judged that there would be no point in arguing here as he reluctantly followed behind her. Adopting Danka's lead, I followed behind them.

After leaving the plaza, we entered along the main street, a business location where a great number of stalls were lined up. Before the stalls, tables and chairs were placed for convenience, making the whole place somewhat like astall village.

Here and there, seated around the tables, people from the surrounding stalls clamored while ordering food and alcohol.

Ariane sat down at a vacant table, asking Danka about buying liquor and snacks.

"Danka~, I want to eat those skewers! And suitable alcohol to go along with it, please. Arc, how about you?"

"I'll pass."

The roasted meat from the stall did give off a pleasant, fragrant aroma, but there's no way I can remove my helmet in front of such a crowd. Though I don't feel hunger with this body, I have no choice but to endure the desire to eat normally.

"Why me…"

Even though Danka was grumbling, he still went off to place the order at the stall in accordance with her request. While watching from behind, I took a seat at the same table as her, while Ponta who had been attached to the top of my head came down onto the table and sat down.

It seemed that the pleasant smell may have stimulated her hunger.

"Kyu~n."

After she let out a cry that seemed a little miserable, Danka brought back alcohol inside a wooden container that looked like a tankard and grilled meat on skewers, while carrying a plate of peanut like nuts to follow up. After placing everything on the table, he took a seat as well.

"Since I was battling the kidnappers in the forest, my stomach has declined. Arc, this person's Danka Neil Maple. Like me, he's also an elven warrior, and, lately, is the one who has been gathering information in this town. Danka, the man in the armor is Arc. He

incidentally joined up and assisted me and Donnaha in the fight with the kidnappers in the forest."

Hmm? She said Maple just now…the name that seemed sweet sounded familiar. That is, it was the same family name as the one before my eyes stuffing her cheeks with the delicious skewered grilled meat, Ariane Glenys Maple.

"If I'm not mistaken, I remember Ariane-dono also giving Maple as your last name, but are you two siblings?"

Danka raised his eyebrows slightly at my question, while Ariane let out an amused laugh, shaking her skewered meat. Ponta's eyes moved left and right, following every movement of the swaying skewer.

"Standard elven names are a combination of one's own name, the name of the parent of the same sex, and the name of the village you belong to. Though I have brothers and sister from the same village, the two of us aren't members of the same family. It simply means that we belong to Great Canada Forest's capital, Maple."

The naming system was considerably different from Japan's.

At any rate, was Great Canada Forest the one commonly known as 'Forest of the Elves' and 'Lost Forest'? Moreover, for the forest's capital to be called Maple…was the place famous for its plentiful production of syrup or something??

"Is 'Great Canada Forest' the same place that the humans call 'Forest of the Elves'?"

"The humans seem to call it that. After we built there a great elven city, the founding Patriarch-sama gave it the name, 'Great Canada Forest'. The name of the capital of the forest, Maple, was one that Patriarch-sama had decided upon."

…Could existences like me have at times spilled over to this world? No matter how I think about it, the names『Canada』and『Maple』don't seem to be coincidences. However, when she spoke about the first patriarch…it was as if the story happened quite a long time ago.

"Around when was the forest's capital, Maple, built?"

"Maybe around eight hundred years ago?"

While speaking, Ariane tilted her head slightly to one side, looking slightly doubtful, and turned her gaze towards Danka, who gave her a small nod. Afterwards, with a cough, he changed the subject.

"Such a thing is trivial right now, don't you agree? Leaving that aside, do you really intend to bring this guy along on the operation this time?"

Danka managed to direct the derailed conversation back to one concerning the current mission.

Ariane beckoned for Danka to come closer with her hand. After he drew near, she whispered something into his ear.

When she finished speaking, in the interior of the hood, his expression changed to one of astonishment. Drawing closer to me, Danka quite skillfully questioned in a small voice that was similar to a shout.

“You, is the part about using transfer magic true?!”

“Yes, although there are some restrictions, I can use it.”

Although I don’t think that anyone could hear us over the surrounding clatter, I still responded in a low voice.

Danka looked alternately at me and Ariane with an expression of disbelief. Ariane gave Ponta a piece of meat and started to play with her triangular ears, not paying him any attention…

“So? You said that you found the base? How’s the situation?”

While pulling on Ponta’s ears, separating them, and caressing her head, she questioned Danka about the ascertained base.

Danka finally calmed down, with his shaken expression replaced by a serious one, and continued talking.

“Ah, yes. The kidnappers’ base is located in the red-light district near the eastern gate. As there’s still a lot of traffic shortly after sunset, we’ll wait for when the traffic lessens during the night to invade. In addition, there are also lookouts; it seems that quite a number of people are inside…”

Rather than being in the noble district surrounding the feudal lord’s castle at the heart of the city, the base seemed to be in the red-light district near the eastern gate. It was an area that I avoided because I didn’t want the trouble of getting involved with the strange lot over there.

“Have you identified the number of people imprisoned there?”

“According to the information I got from my informant, there are four. With more expected to be brought in before long…”

“Since we thwarted their plan for new additions today, then there remains only the four captured in the base. Since we have Arc’s magic this time, the escape should be fairly easy.

“So, we have to wait around here till it’s time to act…”

# *Chapter 17「Waiting to Infiltrate」Part 2*

After discussing the arrangements for the infiltration with Ariane, Danka fixed his hood, pulling it once again over his eyes before sitting with his arms folded across his chest, and calmly closed his eyelids. It appeared that there was still a surplus of time before the infiltration.

"Well then, should I also try to finish taking care of some business…"

While speaking, I stood up and shouldered my luggage bag. In response, Ponta who was purring from Ariane's strokes let out a "Kyun!" on top of the table before getting up and jumping onto my shoulder Although Ariane's gaze was slightly envious as she looked at this scene, while glaring at me, she opened her mouth and said: "I understand your intentions, but…" "I won't run away from here now…" She seemed to be worried about something, but when I tried to assure her, she shook her head as if to say that her concern was different. "I'm not worried about such a thing now. I wanted to say get back as soon as you can." After saying this, she turned away. Somehow or other, I seemed to have gained a tentative trust. With a nod, I said "I'll be back soon" before leaving my seat. Ponta still took her usual reserved spot, and was wagging her tail back and forth judging from the signs transmitted from the back part of my helmet. Leaving the stall village, I headed down the street and made my way towards an area lined with shops. The shops were already closed; the glow leaked from the windows and light from the sparse lamp posts provided the only sources of illumination. When I arrived before the shop I had intended to visit, its doors were already closed, just like all the other shops in the vicinity. A wooden signboard with a sword and shield design as well as the name of the weapons shop engraved on it was hung above the store. "Ahh~, as expected, the shop has already closed~. It can't be helped; I'll have to come again tomorrow…" While ascertaining whether the shop was still open, I heard a young man speaking to himself. When I turned to look behind me, a man in his twenties who was sitting in a wagon that stopped on the street before the weapons shop had his head hung. Judging from his atmosphere and his appearance, he's probably a peddler of some kind. The various types of luggage piled atop the wagon could be made out with the scarce light that shone from the street. "Does Peddler-dono have business with this weapons shop?" "Eh? Ah! H-hey there, Knight-sama!" When I called out, the young peddler had a puzzled expression for an instant as he turned towards me. When he properly saw the silver helmet above my black cloak, he jumped off his wagon in a rush and bowed his head. "I'm merely a travelling adventurer; there's no need to be so formal. So, does Peddler-dono have business with this weapons shop?" 'Eh? Ah! That's right. I planned to come here to stock up the weapons, but my arrangements for entering this town were considerably delayed…" The young merchant said so with a forced smile. This was surely a godsend. The weapons I collected from the kidnappers not long ago were a hindrance that couldn't be helped. "Oh, as a matter of fact, I came here wanting to sell weapons to this shop, but unfortunately it's already closed… If Peddler-dono is fine with it, won't you buy them from me?" "Is it really true?! Um, and could you show me what sort of weapons they are…?" "Of course. Though it's the loot from when I subjugated bandits…" With these words, I placed the luggage bag I carried on my shoulder on the ground, widening the hole. At my response, the young

merchant had an expression of obvious disappointment, after which he hurriedly covered up with a smile. Was it bad to say that they were goods taken from bandits? I took out one of the swords from the bag and handed it over. The young peddler reluctantly held the sword, drawing it from its scabbard in order to check its condition. Thereupon, the smile the young man previously kept up for appearances changed, revealing a look of joy. But his expression, which can be completely understood, was much too honest for a merchant; as your customer, I can easily see it… The young peddler took out a lamp from the luggage carrier, relying on its light as he drew each weapon from their scabbards to examine their condition one by one. “Did you really get these from bandits? These weapons are forged from nothing but considerably fine steel?! No repairs seem to be necessary; with a bit of sharpening they can be sold as is!” Instead of bandits, they were taken from the group of kidnappers who took elves captive, but there’s no need to say that. Nevertheless, it seemed that bandits basically didn’t have good weapons that remained in such condition…probably because the basis of bandit factions was the joining together of those who went broke in order to loot and plunder. The disappointment upon hearing that the weapons were taken from bandits was probably due to the fact that they very likely weren’t superior quality goods. When the young man finished briefly appraising the weapons, he folded his arms in front of the weapons arranged in a line and let out a groan as he looked at them. “Hm~m, the fifteen over here are high quality weapons in good condition, but the one over here is of even higher quality than the rest…” The sword the young man was holding, if I’m not mistaken, was the one that the incompetent man had carried. Although incompetent, he seemed to have had the best sword. One only had to look at the workmanship of the sheath and the brilliance of the blade to draw a clear distinction between the other swords. At any rate, he didn’t notice that as he was engrossed in deliberation, a fretting voice escaped from him. Had he hidden that earlier piece of information, he probably could have bargained for a cheaper price and sold it at a markup elsewhere… I wondered, can this person become successful as a merchant? “When you add it all together, with the amount I have at hand, I can’t afford to buy everything…then, how should I narrow it down…hm~m.” “How about 10 seok apiece, 150 seok altogether, Peddler-dono? As there will be the infiltration operation after this, I didn’t want to bring along an excessive amount of miscellaneous baggage. I’m not bothered with getting less funds in an unfavorable bargain since I’m not worried about money right now. “Eh!? Isn’t it 30 when you normally buy one?!” “…Merchant-dono, it’s best to keep silent about such facts…” When the young merchant spewed out a much too honest price for each sword and I offered some candid advice, he panickedly covered up his mouth with his hands. It was even fun letting this good-natured merchant make a greater profit. Since I wanted to dispose of all the goods onto this merchant right now, the price wasn’t a problem, and I once again suggested the price of 150 gold coins. “Thank you very much! Well~, recently the area around the northern border frequently reported damage due to monsters, so I came here planning to sell weapons and things such as high quality metals.” “Hmm, I see. That being the case, when I advanced from the highway through the town of Rubierute some time ago, I heard that recently quite a big-shot had appeared. At the time of preparation, people would be willing to purchase fine-quality weapons at a good price, right?” “Is that true!? Thank you for the valuable information!” The young man was all smiles with joy as he gave me a look filled with gratitude, piling up the weapons in his wagon as it is and, in high spirits, he pulled his horse to head towards the nearest inn. The sight of him time and time again looking back on the way there, bowing his head, made me feel that I

wanted to continue to support him in spite of only meeting for the first time. Ponta appeared to be bidding him goodbye as her fluttery tail stood up and wagged back and forth. I am of the impression that if the circumstances allowed for it, even spirit beasts would become attached to him… While having such thoughts, I deposited the 150 gold coins inside my now lighter luggage bag and returned it to my back before starting to walk back. Since Ariane and Danka were still at the stall village, I'd better join up with them ahead of time. I returned to the stall village to the same place that Ariane and Danka were sitting at before and sat down at the vacant seat. "You're unexpectedly fast. Have you already finished your business?" Ariane asked while she used her additional newly ordered skewered meat as bait to lure in Ponta. Danka's eyes remained closed, his arms still folded. "Yes, I was able to sell the loot from those guys at a good price." "I'm amazed. The so-called business that you had to take care of was…" When I informed her regarding the contents of my business, Ariane had an astonished expression as she stared at me. When the nearby gluttonous Ponta jumped down onto the table, tempted by the bait, Ariane captured her, roughly rubbing the fur on her belly, and pulled her into an embrace. While watching such interactions, we engaged in lighthearted idle chat as we waited for the time to pass. The night had advanced considerably; in succession, the surrounding stalls were in the midst of ending their operations. Danka, who'd been asleep till now, abruptly stood up and exchanged a look with Ariane. Ariane nodded and quietly left her seat. "Let's go" As I left my seat, Ponta, who'd been sleeping unnoticed on the table, lifted her head and hastily ran up to me. After picking her up and placing her on her usual reserved seat, I held my luggage under my arms and, with Danka taking the lead, followed after him. Well, it would be nice if it ended uneventfully— While I muttered such meager wishes, I made my way through the middle of the dark street that was nearly devoid of people.

# *Chapter 18「Operation Underway」Part 1*

The red-light district stretched across the area near the eastern gate of Diento. The width of the road wasn't very wide; each side was lined with suspicious shops.

The place was dotted with the squatting forms of people who were dead drunk, and the sight of them staggering around while supporting each other on their shoulders, humming jovial songs while red faced, could be seen.

Only at this time of night did nearly all the shops stop their operations. The sparse light that leaked from the shops along with the unreliable street light from the sporadically built lamps deepened all the more the darkness of the alleyways.

The moonlight, which was the primary light source that shone on the streets, could by no means penetrate the alleyways between the dense cluster of buildings.

It was in such an alleyway that the elven warrior Danka quietly advanced, leading the way. During the stillness in the dead of night, the rather loud sound of footsteps meeting the stone paving could be heard resounding.

In a short while, the vanguard Danka abruptly stopped, after which Ariane's feet also stopped.

When Danka peered out of the corner of the alleyway, jerking his chin towards Ariane, she turned her eyes to the previously indicated building.

It appeared that we've arrived at the building of our target.

I spotted signs of two people guarding the back of the building. It was a three-storied building made of stone that, considering it was located near the eastern gate, was still wide.

The buildings surrounding it were densely packed, and the spaces in between were nearly nonexistent. In front of the building, there was an iron-barred gate, with two men who looked like guards standing watch before it. Furthermore, on the other side of the gate, inside a structure similar to a front garden, there were around four ruffians that could be seen sitting crowded around the lamp light, chattering about something, and sometimes raising their voices in coarse laughter.

Since the two lookouts were completely visible from within the bars, even if they're taken out, the others would immediately notice, making a surprise attack difficult. The sturdy bars can also act as a shield that would slow down any frontal assaults.

Attacking the front of the building would instantly cause the surroundings to be confused as they sense an abnormal event. I think attacking alone would probably be very difficult.

Danka's gaze at Ariane asked about what we should do. When Ariane turned her eyes, looking towards my direction, the edges of her charming lips that peeked out from below the

hood raised slightly.

Seeing this, Danka glared at me with a discouraged look on his face.

“That armor isn’t suited for nighttime infiltration…the enemies will notice its sound.”

The armor I have on differ from the poor-quality armor hereabouts: it won’t make noises at random, but isn’t completely silent.

Such equipment was certainly not very fit for an infiltration mission, but for me with a skeleton interior, taking it off was impossible.

While I was considering such a thing, thinking about what to say, Ariane spoke up first.

“Since we have to get rid of all of those guys while rescuing our companions anyway, it shouldn’t matter whether we’re noticed early or not…”

Certainly, even if they see to the rescue of their brethren from the kidnapping group, leaving the organization itself alone will have a very high possibility of someone else being harmed. That being the case, cutting down the ringleader seemed to be self evident.

With that, she calmly spoke out , pointing to a small window at the roof of the building.

“Arc, can you get us to that small window over there?”

From the alleyway, a small window with a tiny triangular roof on top of the three-storied building could be seen. Since the window had no light leaking out, it could possibly be the an attic window.

“Yes, transferring over there would be easy.”

“Good, let’s move into the depths of the alleyway and transfer from there. After invoking your transfer magic, the shining magic formation would make those guys suspicious.”

“No, we’ll move using【Dimensional Step】instead of【Transfer Gate 】. This method’s suited for short-range movement.”

My words made Ariane’s fine eyebrows lift slightly, with her voice raised in surprise with traces of shock mixed in.

“There’s transfer magic exclusively used for short distances?  Really, what kind of person are you?”

“I’m flying to the roof. Better hold onto my shoulders.”

【Dimensional Step】was a short-range magic that allowed everything in direct contact to move together with me, but it won’t bring along anything not in contact, no matter how close it might be. Ponta’s luckily always stuck on my head, so there were no issues there.

After confirming that Ariane and Danka had placed their hands on my shoulder, I turned my gaze towards the roof near the small window.

“【 Dimensional Step】”

The nearby scenery changed completely in an instant; the previous sight turned into one where the moonlight spread out, shining on every roof. The previous stone paving beneath our feet disappeared, replaced by roof tiles. I had stoop down a little to maintain my balance due to the naturally inclined roof.

Going up on the roof while in a full body armour was bad for the heart. Wondering when the roof would collapse while withstanding my weight, making a hole, made my heart go pit-a-pat.

“Amazing…”

Danka’s form fell to his knee in a crouch, muttering while viewing the state of the surroundings.

Since there were few buildings over three stories tall in the city, our visibility above the roof opened up, allowing us to take an extensive view of the state of the entire city. In the southwest direction, built at the central part of a small hill, the feudal lord’s castle and the black silhouette next to it gets a perfect score for its majestic appearance under the night sky.

“Come on, let’s go.”

While restraining her voice, Ariane approached the triangular roof’s window, peering in while slightly opening the small wooden window. There weren’t anything like windowpanes, only a window that was like a wooden cover. Since glass still seemed to be considered a high-class item, using it for an attic window like this would be bizarre.

“Okay, there’s no one inside. We can enter from here.”

Saying so, she hereupon opened the window fully, but her body as she tried to slip into the room was hindered by her voluptuous chest and buttocks, making her have to squirm slightly to get through.

When I looked at it from below, it seemed fine, but seeing it from up close, it was rather small. Ariane and Danka were slender, and it was barely wide enough.

For me in my full body armour, even thinking about entering through this tiny window was impossible. There’s only one thing to do when it becomes like this…

After Ariane quietly passed through, Danka successfully entered from the window without a problem. Finally, when it became my turn, I looked through the small opened window at the appearance indoors, and while invoking【Dimensional Step】without difficulty, completely entered the room.

(Hey! If there's such a method, say so earlier!)

The watching Ariane raised a small voice of protest. She seemed to be embarrassed about the matter where her breasts and buttocks got stuck. Even in this dark room, it was clear that her cheeks were dyed vermillion.

It wasn't the case that she's grown particularly plump, so I don't think it was necessary that she had to be so embarrassed.

"This place seems to be similar to a storeroom…"

Ignoring her voice of protest, Danka did things at his own pace, muttering in a low, carrying voice while analyzing our surroundings.

The room was converted into a storage room, with miscellaneous luggage piled up in appropriate arrangements. In spite of the space, there weren't a lot of luggage left behind; not very many people were coming and going either judging from the dusty air.

Danka moved slowly on the wooden floor so as to not make a sound, and advanced towards the thin stairway that led to the lower floor, peering down and making a gesture that seemed to say, "Be quiet!".

After Danka had confirmed that Ariane had nodded at him, he started to slowly descend the stairway that was connected to the lower floor.

A short time after there were signs of Danka moving around for some reason downstairs, he once more appeared in the attic with only his face showing and signaled "Come!" with his hand.

Seeing it, Ariane and I followed at the same time after Danka to the stairway leading to the lower floor, and descended.

We found ourselves in a room with four bunk beds placed within.

With the exception of Danka in the middle of the room, there weren't any signs of life – only the smell of lukewarm iron rust. There were four men lying in their beds, but each person's throat was stabbed, with all of them dead from the loss of blood.

While Danka covered the ruffians' heads with blankets to disguise them as being asleep, Ariane approached the door in the middle of the room and peeked at the state outside.

It seemed to be safe; Ariane beckoned for us to go towards her. Once Danka had finished with his disguise and we moved together close to the door, Ariane gave directions in silence.

Danka was on right, Ariane was left, and I was inner center. Us three nodded to one another, and the door was opened.

The door opened up to a corridor ahead, with a rectangular atrium that could be seen in the

interior. On both sides of the atrium were three equally spaced doors, and further inside, next to one of the doors, a stairway that led to the bottom could be seen.

Lamps were installed here and there in the passageway, illuminating in entirety the inside of the building.

This brightness in the atrium allowed for looking out over those approaching from downstairs, and given that the other party can also confirm with their sight, it's dangerous to investigate the doors on both sides without bending over.

Ariane and Danka soundlessly approached before the doors on each side in a low stance, straining their ears to find out the circumstances inside. Before long, the doors slowly opened and the pair slipped inside their respective rooms. I was the only one left on this level's corridor now.

Given that it was impossible not to make a sound walking on the wooden floor while fully equipped in metal armor, I used【Dimensional Step】to move to one of the interior visible doors. While thinking useless thoughts such as whether my legs would become frail if I relied on this magic too much for various things, I approached the door.

This wooden door differed from the typical doors in its vicinity that spoke of simplicity, with the door having dignified decorations and being fitted with a handle made of metal.

I can feel the presence of a person from beyond the door, but as I investigated and noticed the presence, a vigilant atmosphere drifted over. It seemed that the person on the other side had sensed my presence.

However, the other person since becoming alert hadn't done anything like raising their voice. I can't stand here like this the whole time without moving, so I decided to open the the door, laying my hand on the doorknob, but, somehow or other, it appeared to be locked. I peered into the door through the doorknob's keyhole and looked inside the room. Since the keyhole was like those old elementary school warehouse locks, I was able to see inside.

While looking at the view of the room on the other side of the keyhole, I decided on a target spot and activated【Dimensional Step】.

I transferred into the bright room in the same posture as when I was peering into the keyhole from the corridor. The inside of the room was brighter than the corridor outside, and the room for some reason was crowded with gaudy furnishings lined up on both sides.

The middle of the room had a coffee table with a leather-covered couch, with an amber work desk further inside the room. A fat well-dressed man was sprawled with his face laying on the desk, not moving an inch.

Furthermore, illuminated by the lamps, there were three bloodstained armed ruffians collapsed around the vicinity. I could tell that all of them were already dead…

Hereupon, from the desk's shadow, a person dressed in completely black revealed their

head, examining me before stepping forward and approaching.

"The door's lock should've been closed; nevertheless, how did Armor Onii-san enter just now?"

The person in black spoke in a small muffled voice, but, instead of answer the question, I unintentionally let out the first thought that came to mind.

"Ninja…"

At my unintentionally leaked words, the eyebrow of the person who was completely black from top to bottom lifted up slightly.

And simultaneously, covered by a hood, the ears attached to the area at the top of their head, with a twitch, moved in response…

The person before my eyes appeared to be a petite young girl. Her whole body was covered with clothes made of black fabric in a manner that was particularly moe, an outfit absolutely worthy of belonging to a ninja. Her legs had greave-type protectors made of metal, with gauntlets for her arms, and worn on her head was a black scorched metal-plated headband with a gold crown sewn on, with a straight-bladed dagger visible on her lower waist.

The only area with visible skin was around her lovely blue eyes that didn't give off much emotion, while on top of the hood, black triangular-type animal ears were attached. I also noticed just now that a black tail was attached to her waist with a belt-like shape, with the tip of the tail sometimes moving in a flutter.

The ears and tail didn't show any signs of having the atmosphere of an artificial product; no matter how you looked at it, the responses they were displaying showed them to be alive. Following the elves, I seemed to have come across another new race in this world.

The young female ninja also surveyed me with my full-length black cloak wrapped around my armored body with a green fox atop my head; I could see her gaze carefully investigating my whole body.

"You don't seem to be a human from this place. Did you come here for some objective as well?"

The young female ninja finished her observation and threw another question at me, making me hard pressed to answer. Although she doesn't seem to be an enemy, it would be clumsy to reveal the purpose behind coming here to an outsider so easily.

While thinking about how to reply, the young female ninja already guessed at my purpose in coming here.

"Coming here to rescue the elves or some such…? If that's the case, they seem to be held captive in the dungeon."

I wasn't able to hide my surprise at the girl's words. With me wearing this whole-body armor, there's no way to tell whether I'm a human or an elf inside. Given that both Ariane and Danka were in the midst of searching the other rooms right now, there weren't any elves close to me, yet she was able to correctly guess my objective without hesitation.

I sent a fleeting glance at the former guards scattered about at her feet.

These were most likely her doings. Despite her slender physique, she seemed to be quite skilled. Did she get information on the circumstances of those being kept here out of them?

Once she was convinced of my objective, her gaze lightened a little.

"Did you sneak in here for the purpose of freeing the elves as well?"

Calming myself down, I asked her, though her purpose seemed to differ. She quietly shook her head, repudiating my guess.

"The object I'm after wasn't here. I was just considering what to do about the elves captured here…but, apparently, it seems that I can leave them to you guys."

She pulled in the large heavy-seeming leather bag that was placed on the desk, then she shouldered it, securing it tightly with a rope. Stopping at the opened window at the wall across the room with her foot set atop it, the young female ninja turned around to bid farewell.

"I'll leave the rest to you; since it's you, the chance to meet again is probable. Well then, let's meet again… Oh, about two elves are captured in the feudal lord's castle…"

The minute that she said that, despite carrying on her back a leather bag that rang out with heavy-seeming sounds, with movements that couldn't be sensed, she went from the window to grasping the edge of the roof, and abruptly, with a single turn, the body on top of the roof disappeared from sight.

Before long, the girl's thin presence faded away, disappearing in the blink of an eye under the veil of darkness that descended on the whole town, leaving no traces behind.

# *Chapter 19「Operation Commences」Part 2*

After the ninja girl left, I took a look behind the desk she originally came from. There was a small stone trapdoor opened under the desk.

There was a strong looking lock rolling around next to the door, having failed its purpose.

Peeking inside the door I found a small storage area, that contained a box full of metal ring and documents.

Apparently it was some kind of safe.

The heavy sack she was carrying might have been filled with the money. But judging from her demeanor and appearance, she only did this to cover up her true intentions here as a robbery. It's not like I can condemn her anyway because I take money from bandits.

I didn't know what she was looking for, but it didn't seem like it would hinder our operation. Based on the parting words she left anyway. There seem to be two more elves trapped in the feudal lord's castle. That would mean that the elf hunting had been authorized by the feudal lord himself.

If it's true, then I'll have to tell Ariane about it.

Once this rescue was done we might have have to infiltrate the lord's castle.

While contemplating that, I pick up one of the parchments from the safe. Removing the bindings from the documents, the contacts turned out to be a sells reports.

The amount on the contract was insane, it exceeded well over 10,000 suk.

The 10,000 gold price tag was the cost of the elves being sold here.

There were six more contacts just like this one, seven in total.

The contracts included the names of those that had already been auctioned off. They also had the names of the buyers as well, so it might be possible to track down the elves that had been sold.

Still, elf slaves seem to be sold at outrageous prices according to this contract. I wonder why there was such a high demand for men though?

I shoved the seven contracts into my luggage sack before putting the ten metal rings in after them. I wrapped the rings in a cloth and put them in a leather pouch to prevent them from jangling about.

The owner already has cold feet so he won't mind.

Once the safe was cleaned out, I took a look around the flashy room that reeked of flamboyance, but most of the stuff was on the bulky side.

Since my business here was done, I decided to prepare for the other two to join me a little early. I grab the key hanging on the door and unlocked it. Once they were done checking the rooms on each side, they should be heading here.

After a while, Ariane and Danka entered the room quietly and quickly closed the door.

"I only found a few small fry in the rooms, how about you?"

"There was nothing in particular in mine."

Both got result that they weren't happy about.

After hearing Danka's answer, Ariane's golden eyes were questioningly pointed in my direction.

"I gained some information. The captured elves are probably being held in the underground dungeon. There is also this."

I pulled the parchments I got from the safe out of my sack and handed them to Ariane. She looked at it them with suspicion for a moment before she opened one and glanced over the contracts. Wrinkles started to crop up on her forehead.

"This……!"

"Those are the elves sale contracts. Since the names of the buyers are written down in several places, you should be able to use it as a clue. There's more, apparently there are two more elves trapped in the feudal lord's castle."

"Where'd this information come from……"

Ariane looked up and glanced around the room as she asked that. The bodies inside the room have already become cold, and the boss was nothing more than a ornament for the desk now.

She judged that they were the source of the information. The source of the information is a trivial matter, what's important now is that we need to move quickly.

While I trusted the words of the ninja girl…… it was merely based on my own intuition. Perhaps, it's better to let them develop their own conclusions here.

"Once we're finished here, we'll head over the feudal lord's castle. Hiring you was the right decision……, normally it wouldn't be easy to sneak into the castle."

She laughed while saying that and rolled the parchment back up before returning it to me.

"To think that the feudal lord was involved……! The elders have to be informed of this when

we return.”

Danka raised an eyebrow as he spit out that comment.

Judging by the amount of money involved in the elven slave trade, wealthy nobles and merchant must be apart of it; has my workload been increased?

I suppose I could collect some extra income from the feudal lord’s castle……

“If our brethren are in the underground dungeon we have to go there at once. After that, the feudal lord’s castle.”

Danka nodded in agreement at Ariane’s words and left the room. I follow behind Ariane and Danka using【Dimensional Step 】to prevent my armor from making noise.

We descended the stairway through the second floor to the first floor’s central hall.

The disarray of the tables and chairs gave the hall the atmosphere of a pub, in fact there were even a few bad men hanging around. Fortunately they haven’t noticed us yet.

Once Ariane gave the “fall back” gesture, we quietly returned to the second floor.

“As expected, it’s impossible to reach the dungeon from here without being noticed. I’ll take care of the ones on the first floor, while you two deal with the reinforcements from the second floor.”

Both Danka and I nod at the suggestion, and Ariane pulls out her sword and focuses on the stairway to the first floor.

Then she leaps out in a flash.

From the the top of the stairwell, she leaped out with sword in hand; the gathered men were shocked at this occurrence.
『–Dance within this blade, flame– 』

After she chanted in a low voice, flames started to run down the blade of her sword. The man she cut upon landing with the sword of fire, no only let out a spray of blood, but also had red flames wrap around his entire body and set his clothes ablaze.

“Gyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!!!”

As the man’s death throes filled the the large hall, sounds of activity from other rooms on the first floor and on both sides of the second floor could be heard.

As his body was roasted by the flames, the man fluently rolled about between the table and chairs. A few of the near by men tried to put out the flaming man, but Ariane simply attacked them with her flame sword causing the fire to get even larger.

Danka came out of one of the rooms on the second floor and started to kill men that were

trying to reach the first floor, with a sword covered in light. From this side it looked like a dance where no one was fit to partner with Danka.

I recall that the elves were a group that specialized in magic, but seeing the swordsmanship these two, I may have to rethink that assumption.

Since the men coming out of the farther back rooms could see what was going on, they tried to take another path around Danka, but I fired off【Rock Bullet】at each of them. Rocks the size of fist not only tore new holes into the men but also into the wall behind them.

The guards listening to this outside could join the battle at any moment.

Using【Dimensional Step】, I transfer in front of the front door and lowered the large bolt on the door to prevent anyone from getting in or out. None of these people here would ever leave this place alive.

“You bastardddd!!!”

A man trying to raise the moral of the group came charging at me from behind. When he got in range, I lightly throw my fist out in retaliation.

I felt the man’s skull shatter before he was blow away, only after crashing through a table and chair did the impact with a wall stop him.

The physical abilities of a level 255 body were a bit overkill for opponents of this level.

Suddenly, a large wall of fire came from the within the compound. I think one of the men Ariane set ablaze with her sword might have ran towards the kitchen. Apparently some of the cooking oil caught fire.

While the building was made of stone, it was filled with flammable objects. Columns of flame started to spring up all over the place.

“Kyu～n……”

Ponta, who was a top my head till now, wrapped herself around my neck and turned her ears downward because she didn’t like the fire.

It like I’m wearing a fur scarf next to a blazing inferno.

Looking around I saw that the the clean up of the second floor was complete as Danka had already made his way to the first floor.  Ariane had  shock off the flames from her sword and was searching perimeter.

I could hear that someone was knocking of the large front door and faintly make out a yelling voice. The door seemed to be thicker and heavier than I thought, and combined with the firmly placed bolt it meant that no one could get in easily.

“There’re the stairs to the basement!”

As the fire spread through the first floor, I look in the direction that Danka called out to and saw a stone staircase leading to the basement, that was hidden behind the main stairwell.

Frowning at the rising temperature caused by the fire, Ariane took off the hood of her cloak and gave a silent “follow me” gesture before running down the gloomy stairs.

Danka quickly follows behind, and I bring up the rear.

“What the hell!!? Gyuaa!!!!”

The scream of a man and the sound of metal clashing alerted me that there was a fight going on below as I descended the stairs.

“Fuck!! Why are you in this place!! What are those guys upstairs doing!!!”

I heard the sound of something hitting the floor, and when I arrived it was already over.

The basement was unexpectedly spacious, and the walls were lined with cell doors. The smell of the three fallen men’s’ blood was mixing with the earthen smell of the basement was a little disgusting though.

While covered in blood, Ariane reached down to one of the fallen men and rips off a metal key ring from his waist before running to one of the cells.

“I’m Ariane Glenys Maple! I’m here to rescue you!!”

When she delivered her introduction, something hit the cell door like a brick and caused a loud「Clang」sound to resonate.

“That’s a lie!? Warriors from maple have come to help!?”

Judging by appearance the girl against the cell door and shouted in surprise and joy was around 17 years old, and the girls that appeared after her looked even younger than that.

They all wore the same metal collars the children in the forest had on.

Ariane quickly inserted key after key into the keyhole looking for the right one. Before long, I hear the sound of the lock clicking and the girl burst out of her cell, the other girls were soon freed as well.

While the girls gave their gratitude to Ariane, I noticed that the flames had reached the top of the stone stairs. The removal of the『Magic eating collar』will have to wait, we don’t have the time to take things slow.

“Ariane-dono, the first floor has been consumed by the flames. We should hurry.”

When the girls noticed my voice, a number of screams were let out and they all hid behind Ariane.

Due to my body being covered by a black cloak and my face by my helmet, the first impression with the girls wasn't very good.

"It's all right, this man is a helper that I employed.  Is this everyone that had been captured?"

The girls smiled a little before simultaneously nodding their heads at her question

"Arc, our business in done here."

All right. I'll transfer us outside of town in a moment!"

I approached the group of four girls that were around Arine, and I evoked the magic when I was sure Danka was within range.

"【Transfer Gate】!"

The dimly lit basement was illuminated by the light of the magic formation that appeared beneath our feet.

The four elf girls had a variety of expression as they clanged to Ariane as the floating sensation of the magic phenomenon occurred.

Despite the girls' anxiety the floating sensation pasted in an instant, their vision went dark, and the curtain of the moonlight nighttime sky proceeded the the darkness.

The flow of the river could be heard and even the shadow of the six arch bridge could be seen. On the other side of the bridge,  Diento's city wall could be seen.

The girls surrounding Ariane looked around in amazement as they couldn't understand what happened in that instant.

Along with the sounds of the river and the wind blowing through the grass, the high-pitched sound of a bell could be heard from the towns direction. It was the alarm bell to inform people of the fire.

I could see smoke rising and a faint red glow from the other side of the city wall.

It was a sight that everyone in town could see……

# *Chapter 20「Assault on Diento's lord」Part 1*

The Diento territory is ruled by the feudal lord, in the fortress that was roughly at the territory's center, one man ran down the corridor that led to the lord's bed room at great speed. While the castle's interior was very quiet, the sound of the alarm bells could be faintly heard from behind the glass windows.

The double-doors of the feudal lord's bedroom was luxuriously made with thick quality wood and ordained with gold.

Two sentries stood guard as the night witch and monitored for any suspicious individuals.

The panicked man run straight up to the door and started to violently bang on it, but no one could blame the sentries for this.

The man violently banging of the feudal lord's bedroom door was Cyrus Dorman, Consul of Diento.

"Triton-sama! It's Cyrus! There is a pressing matter that I have to inform you about!!"

His usually pale and sonic face was slightly red and had nervous sweat striking down it tonight.

"Cyrus, why are you here at such an hour? Open it."

Since the voice was muffled by the door, Triton doubtfully called to the speaker before ordering one of the maids inside the room to open the door.

Only the word "Rudeness" was heard has the man made his way inside the room.

Triton rose for his bed in the dimly lit room, and quickly dawned a gown so that he could meet Cyrus at the door.

"Triton-sama, the people in the room……"

While smoothing out his white mustache, Triton prompted the two maids to leave; after glancing at Cyrus the two obliged and left the room.

"What is this urgent business you spoke of?"

"Fires have broken out in the city—"

When Triton heard that he grimaced and let out a large sigh in disappointment.

While marquis Triton thought that there was no reason to barge into his bedroom for such a trivial matter, consul Cyrus continued to speak.

“A fire spread to the major slave trading buildings, including our “storehouse”!”

“What!!!!”

The startled Triton forcibly stood up and angrily approached the consul.

“The delivery date for the Eastern Leburan Empire is closing in! What happened to the products that were being kept in the “storehouse”!?”

“That’s, the guards say that someone infiltrated the building before the fire broke out……”

“What’d they say!? The guards were supposed to stop intruders!! What on earth were those fools doing!!!”

The marquis openly berated his foolish subordinates in his anger.

“The front door was suddenly bolted shut, they could only hear screams from within. All sides of the building were covered to prevent any blind spots , the only possibility is that there was a traitor within—”

“Fuck!! Send some of the castle soldiers out to make sure the fire is properly extinguished immediately! Even if the top burned, the basement was made of stone so it wouldn’t be easy to burn!!

“It wouldn’t look good to have the castle soldiers only appear there though…… If you did not dispatch them in the other three locations—”

“Don’t bring that up now; dispatch them in mass!!!”

In response to Cyrus’s protest, the veins on Triton’s head bulged as he yelled. Panicked by the threatening atmosphere, Cyrus tripped over himself as he quickly left the room to carry out the orders.

In order to quench his throat after raving so much, the short on breath Triton grabbed a pitcher of water next to his bed and started to gulp it down.

“……Fortunately the delivery date had been postponed. Worst case we will simply have to deliver what we have on hand to eastern Lebrun as a reimbursement for their order……”

Speaking those words in disgust, marquis Triton rubbed his forehead to suppress the headache he got from thinking up the later correspondence.

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**Arc POV**

Many smoke pillars could be seen rising above Diento from the bank of the Rydell river, and I watched as they clouded the night sky.

Strange—, the kidnappers’ base was in the red-light district close to the east gate. I’d

understand if the fire spread in that area, but why were there so many fires popping up around the city?

“Ariane-dono, did your collaborators set the city on fire?

It’s possible that members of Ariane’s group were using this as a cover for the rescue operation. However, with an unpleasant expression she denied the accusation.

“I don’t know. Only Danka and I should have been in the city. Those fires were caused by something else. In any case, it’s an unexpected event that perfectly covers our infiltration. We can also take advantage of this confusion to infiltrate the castle as well.

It didn’t seem like she was telling a lie. And it is a good opportunity like she said. With fires sprouting up in so many places, a lot of people most have been dispatched from the castle to extinguish them.

No, if the underground organization I was connected to was threatened, the first thing I would do is dispatch my troops. With the castle’s lowered security, now would be the best time to search it.

“Well, the number guards will be insufficient if the soldiers from the castle were dispatched. Assuming we take this opportunity to slip inside the lord’s castle……”

That moment Ariane licked her sexy full lips and gave a fearless laugh, before she laid her sight on the earnest expression sporting Danka.

“Danka, could you keep an eye on the kids. If I’m not mistaken, the nearest village is a day away if we go upstream and enter the large forest right?”

“That’s about right. At the the upper reach of the river, there is a fulcrum with the Riburuto river. I will wait for you there.

“Please do. Arc, start removing the magic eating collars.”

“Yes”

While Ariane encouraged the elven girls to stand in front of her, I approached one of them and slowly placed my hand of the collar, so that I didn’t frighten her.

“【Anti-curse】”

When the magic formation formed and sunk into the collar, it made the same clear snipping sound as last time before opening and falling off.

Although the other girls were surprised, they came over to be with looks of expectation.

Nodding, I use【Anti-curse】on each of the girls and destroy the remaining collars. After each of the collars were destroyed, the girls offered me their words of gratitude.

“He really is capable of curse removal magic……”

Danka also quietly voiced his surprise.

“Let’s quickly head to the feudal lord’s castle!”

I feel a gentle tap on the shoulder of my armor, as she vehemently yelled and stared in the direction of Diento’s lord’s castle. That was the signal to transfer to the castle.

When I give a small nod, Ponta who was around my neck let out a cry that said she was ready to go.

I first moved to the other side of the river using【Dimensional step】. The sound of the alarm bells became louder after we moved closer to the city.

Since the the south side of the wall faced the river there were no homes built within the outer wall, meaning that there were no witnesses to what was happening.

Since it was so late at night, there weren’t many guards on top of the outer wall either, only a few sentries were sparsely place along the wall.

In a matter of seconds, I used【Dimensional step】to transfer to the top of the outer wall and then to the inner wall that was visible from there.

Unlike the the outer wall, that separates the wilderness from the city, there were no sentries placed on the inner wall.  Was the purpose of this wall to defend the city in case of siege warfare?

Still, to be safe I crouch down and observable the situation in town though one of gaps in the wall’s railing.

Smoke was coming from all over the city, there were maybe four points of origin?  The four fires most have gone off simultaneously as it would be impossible for them to have been set off leisurely given the timing.

After concealing her dark elf body with her gray cloak, Ariane glared at me with her golden eyes, insisting that I transfer to the next location.

Since her lilac skin was covered by her cloak that melted into the darkness, only her golden eyes could be seen from within, it was like she was some conductor of some kind of galactic express. Though the body on the inside is a dynamite one though……

I look at the raised castle of the feudal lord that stood at the center from the gap in the railing. The castle, which was dimly lit by moonlight, was a great distance away from here. The foot of the castle was rested within its own large shadow, and the outskirts of the building were swallowed by darkness.

Ariane was still glaring at me from behind, but it was not like I was staring out at the city

without a propose. It seemed that I won't be able to merely transfer near the castle.

I first thought that the feudal lord's castle was built with a mechanism that obstructed magic, but really it was just a matter of finding a suitable transfer destination. This magic doesn't seem to be usable in utter darkness.

Since the castle's roof was illuminated by the moonlight I set the transfer location there and invoke【Dimensional Step】without a hitch.

The city was built atop a hill and the castle was placed at the highest point of the city; there was nothing obscuring the view of the area up here. It was a great view. I would like to experience this view during the day if possible.

Ariane was surprised when we suddenly transferred to the roof, and she late out a small yelp as she tried to regain her balance.

"Ya! Hey don't suddenly transfer to the roof without warning?! If you're going to move to an unstable foothold say so before hand."

"Ah, I did something foolish."

Ponta, suddenly moved to the top of my helmet and let out a growl in protest of my treatment, causing Ariane to apologize. Since Ponta settled the matter, I'll buy her some grapes when this is over.

As expected, we were able to watch all the activity of the castle from the roof, without anyone being aware of us.

The feudal lord's castle wasn't very elegant in appearance; looking more like a fort than anything else. In addition to the two walls that surrounded the castle, there was as a moat, making it had to invade.

In between the walls and the castle, there was a large garden in the front, and the rest of the space was filled with a large barracks and an empty training field.

The castle was composed of six outer towers, connected to the central structure by small corridors.

From atop one the six towers that we were standing on, it was possible to view over the entire city.

The only way for enemies to spot us is if they randomly decided to look up, but there was no way to search for the elves.

The tower we were on right now was a lookout tower, that can act as a grain storage or various other uses if the f0rt was ever under siege. There seems to be facilities for accommodating captives and criminals underground, now where would I place high-end elven slaves?

“Araine-dono. I hesitate to ask, but what type of treatment do elven slaves receive?”

“…… is that question really relevant now?”

She glared at me with her golden eyes from the depth of her cloak with an openly displeased expression.

“The kind of treatment they receive, I think will make it easier to Identify their location……”

Upon hearing my intentions, she replied with disgust after a while.

“In the case of the woman, they often become playthings……, the men are made to to fornicate with noble women to produce children.”

“When I looked over the sells contracts, why was the cost of the males higher? Does it have something to do with them fornicating with noble women?”

“When a mixed raced child is born, it will inherit the race of of its mother right?”

Mixed raced children took after their mothers……, that’s another thing I didn’t know, but I chime in to prompt her to make her point.

“A human child is thereby born with the high magical power that is the characteristic of the elves…… The human nobles have many people with high magical aptitude, that was taken from elves in the days of old. Ah, those human still aren’t able use spirit magic though—”

I see, in order to survive in this world overrun with monsters, the humans had to become better at handling magic, so they forcibly took the power from the elves.

Then it’s the nobles that are mostly capable of magic…… Only financial and military might hold power in this world. Why would those of this country allow the beings called elves run free when they can strengthen their own military might?

This world is built upon feudalism, so it’s unlikely that human rights are respected.

So with the mindset of a man in power——, the whereabouts of the missing elves should be decided by that.

If I was connected to the to the captives sexually I would not keep them in the regular prisons, so we should probably check around were the feudal lord sleeps?

There were a few soldiers routinely patrolling the the grounds. Weather or not this minimal amount was the result of the fires that broke out in town is unknown, but I’m still grateful for this situation.

“I’m about to transfer to the main building of the castle.”

When Ariana placed her hand on my shoulder and gave an affirmative, I transferred us from the top of the tower to a bush next to the main residence.

Glass is fitted into the window frame, and you were able to see inside the residence. I confirm that the were no human shadows in the corridor before I transfer inside it. The view from this side is not the same from the outside of the window.

The corridor was wider along the side of the residence it was connected to, and it was filled with various furnishings.

Ariane silently walks up to one of the corridor's doors, and quickly checked the room behind it.

She give me the "Follow me" gesture before entering the room. The room had a parquet wooden floor, a polished wooden table surrounded by chairs, and at the back hung a large tapestry. Based on the room's atmosphere it was probably a waiting room. The interior was dimly light, and outlook was bleak.

Directly across from us was another door, which Ariane opened and scouted out the area beyond it.

When I saw the building from the roof of the tower it don't look anything impressive, but it seemed rather large from the inside. Was there an underground dungeon here after all?

Ariane calmly opened the door the rest of the way and then left. I followed her out of the waiting room.

This corridor was only half the width of the previous one, doors lined both sides, and there were small pictures between each door.

Farther down, the corridor curves to the left making it impossible to see beyond the turn. I transfer to the edge of it and peek around.

At some point the hallway came to a dead end, with barred wooden door at the center of the wall, and a guard dozing off in his chair in front of it. Unlike the the previous ones, the barred door was gave off a strange vibe.

When I transfer to the side of the sleeping guard's side I grab his head and twist it. A sickening sound rings throughout the L shape hall as I kept the now limp body from hitting the floor.

I ripped the key from the dead guard's waist and slide it into the door's keyhole.

When I hear the sound of the shutters turning I slowly open the door; the room was perfectly square that wasn't too wide, and there as a staircase leading underground.

We were on the first floor of the building and the stairs led to the basement. Since there was a guard I was able to find a clue.

I called out to Ariane, who had been searching the the other rooms till now.

“Araine-dono”

In spite the quietness of my voice, Ariane appeared in an instant, proving the excellence of the elves’ hearing.

She nodded when I inclined my head towards the square room and followed behind shortly after. After checking the stairs in the room, she proceeds to descend them.

As if she were a ninja, she soundlessly decided the stairs despite them being made of wood. I used transfer to follow behind her Indian martial arts movements. My metal armor made it impossible to imitate her stealthy movements.

“Gufu!! Ga!”

I heard the groans of a man from the basement, before something hit the floor and things went quiet. A guard probably had been stationed below.

Various lamps around the camber acted as the only source of light in this basement, and three iron reinforced doors lined the stone wall to the right. Since the doors were windowless, we could not tell what was on the other side of them.

“My name is Ariane Glenys Maple.  Are any of my brethren here?!”

When Ariane pounded on the door and announced herself, there was an immediate answer from the other side.

“A warrior from Maple?! Help has come!!”

“Thank goodness! I’d like to leave as soon as possible ～!! Please～!”

It seems that warriors from Maple were synonymous with the best among the elves. Relief and delight could be heard from the voice on the other side of the door.

In order to free them, Ariana searched the body of the fallen guard but didn’t seem to find anything.

“The key isn’t here! Where is it!?”

Irritation was mixed into her voice, and all of a sudden the answer came from the other side of the door.

“The feudal lord has the key. Thanks to the magic eating collars we can’t use spirit magic to break down the door.”

I see, it is not necessary for the guard to have a key to the cells. There would be no need for the key of the door could easily be broken down with spirit magic.

“Step back from the door.”

Pausing for a moment after saying so, once I was sure that the person moved away, I delivered a powerful kick to the iron reinforced door.

「Bakiin!」When I heard that loud sound, the door remarkably fought off its hinges. With my current strength, bending the cell bars to escape might even be possible.

On the other side of the door was a slender fair-skinned woman with a exasperated expression on her face. She had the blonde hair, green eyes and long ears of the elves; though only a thin piece of cloth covered her delicate frame. Gazing a little lower, I caught sight of the modest bud of her chest. Dropping my view even farther, I noticed that her wrist were bound with simple wooden shackles.

It was probably done to discourage them from trying to escape. Since the elves' bodies weren't built with a lot of muscle, this would still be effective enough.

Leaving the shackles to Ariane I open the other door in the same way, and a similar looking women appeared beyond the frame. However, the women from before had long hair while this woman's hair was cut short.

"Who's that person over there in the knight armor?"

The short haired women asked Ariane that question while looking in my direction. The elves must not have people that are equipped in full body armor. Suspicious looks were passed my way.

"His a helper that I employed for this rescue mission. It maybe hard to believe, but you don't need to worry because he is a reliable person." *//Silver: In other words he's done enough shit to be taken down with us if we're caught.//*

She gave a wryly smile as she said that and asked me to remove the magic eating collars from the two people.

I lightly nod before casting【Anti-curse】on the two, and with the familiar snapping sound the collars fall to the floor.

"…… Surprising…… To commission someone capable of removing curses without a chant……"

The long haired woman said the same thing Danka muttered, while she rubbed her neck to verify that this was real.

"That's my general purpose. After we escape from here and join with the others, will the plan be complete—?"

In the middle of proposing our next action, a objection was given by the two former captives.

"Wait! I'm sorry for causing you trouble after freeing us, but that pig of a feudal lord and the people of Rhoden need to be taught a lesson!"

“Yeah～! I’ve been imprisoned here for four years! My mind will never be at ease if I don’t dispose of that pig with my own hands～!”

The two state their claims in Ariane’s direction, and plead with their eyes for our next action. She looks to have thought it over a little before she turned and replied to the women.

“Okay. To prevent future sorrows, it’s wise to end the feudal lord whose the root of this evil now. Where is the lord?”

Urged on by the fact that the assassination of the lord was accepted, the two hopped over the fallen body as they made their way to the stairs. Despite the two only wearing thin over shirts, they quickly ran up to the first floor, with Ariane following close behind.

The lord’s assassination seems to have immediately put into action. While I wanted to avoid drawing attention to myself with flashy actions, I couldn’t simply ignore the intentions of the requester in this situation.

Since it was ostensibly the elves’ retribution, in order not to be conspicuous it’s better to take part in this criminal act.

# *Chapter 21「Assault on Diento's lord」Part 2*

I transferred to the first floor and chased after the three elven women. Leaving the stair room, they made a beet for the room at the end of the hall and appeared in the middle of the main hallway.

A large central stairway extended to the second floor from the main entrance, and stairs to the third floor seem to be on both sides of the second floor overlooking everything. At the top of the central stairway, a portrait of a man with grey hair and a protruding stomach decorated the wall. In the center of the room hung a large chandelier, and the diversity of the expensive furniture displayed here showed the power of the master of this place.

"The feudal lord's bedroom is on the third floor. Still for no one to be watching the hall…… It's strange～?"

The short-haired former captive elf murmured that as she glanced around the main hall before a flame formed in her right hand. She would probably shoot the spirit magic at any on duty guards.

"The staff is spread thin do to the fires in town……"

I voiced my opinion after I caught up with them in the central hall. The hall's floor was made of polished marble and made quite a sound when I walked on it in my armor, so I unintentionally stop.

"That's convenient! Let's hunt down that pig immediately!!"

The long haired elf let out a fearless laugh as a unnatural gale filled the room and quietly jumps into the air. Ponta let out a call as the woman's fabric cloth fluttered in the wind as she landed on the second floor.

She must be a wind manipulator like Ponta.

The other two quickly run after her as they headed towards the third floor stairway.

"Kyun Kyun!"

Since Ponta was in a fit atop my head, I used【Dimensional Step】to move in front of the third floors stairway.

When I reached the third floor I heard men and women screaming as a the sounds of battle rang out in the depths of the hall.

With a「Doon」sound, I saw servant women coming from the depth of the hall that was decorated with ornamental armors clad in a ordained mantles.

They were probably the eyewitnesses to tonight's events. If their testimony says that a

suspicious knight was here it will be difficult to move about in the future.

Telecommunications haven't been created yet and many men wear armor in the city, so they testimony probably wouldn't do much, but I should still be careful here.

When I saw one of the half naked servant women getting close, I moved to the side and pretended to be one of the ornamental armor suits. Ponta, who was a top my head, read the mood and didn't move an inch. From the side Ponta's thick far should pass as the plumage often seen on roman helmets. While I was thinking about such trivial matters, another servant dashed out of the room.

The once luxurious double doors were now mercilessly battered and what seemed to be the bodies of the guards were scattered about. Here and there I could see the missing limbs of these poor souls scattered about.

Stepping beyond the doorway, I found myself in a bedroom of considerable size. Even with my untrained eye I can see that articles in this room were all expensive, from the beautiful sculptures to the canopy with a large bed inside.

The whole room was filled with crystal-like objects on candlesticks, that illuminated the room like fluorescent lights.

At the back of the room, a portrait similar to the one in the hall was hung, in front of it was a pitiful man with his lower body fully exposed and a knife in his hands.

The long-haired elf kicked the exposed lower half of the man with all her might.

"Gyaahiii

When she command it in a blood chilling tone, she stuffs a piece of a torn sheet in the marquis's mouth, and turns back and nods at the two elves that had been releasing magic power behind her.

The two leap at the marquis immediately; only muffled screams could be heard in the room as blood sprayed within the vicinity. I felt like I was watching a scene from a gangsta drama. No matter how high this body's abilities are it would be best not to provoke them……

While trying to escape the brutal reality of the room, I came upon a solid door that was sealed shut with a strong looking lock.

The beautifully engraved lock was enough to create curiosity about what was on the other side of the door.

I draw my sword from my waist and slashed at the door. The lock to keep out intruders was useless as the door was as easily cut diagonally as a piece of paper cut by scissors.

After I tore what remained of the door off its hinges, I advanced inside to find expensive looking furniture and artworks crammed in the room; at first glance it seemed like items I would have no use for were randomly thrown in here.

The were several wooden crates in the back, and when I opened them I found that they were stuffed with leather bags filled with gold coins.

What is it about gold that never fails to charm people? I felt like I had an unintentional grin on my face when I found this treasure. Though there were no facial muscles to grin with……

As you'd expect it would be difficult to take all of the gold coins now, but I could take quite a bit of them if I repack some of the leather bags.

Like she said before, the way in which I acquire wealth is indeed dubious. Thought nothing rude can be said about stealing from here.

At least I think so as I promptly throw bags of gold into my sack. Since its really gold, my luggage sack might tear if I'm too greedy. While I was searching for more gold coins with a overjoyed expression, one sword displayed on the wall caught my attention.

There was a faint mottle above the blade and the sword itself gave off a faint silver luster. The halt was in the shape of a lion's head that had red jewels for eyes.

Where have I seen that sword before——

Ah, it was a sword I've seen in the game. It was a masterpiece grade item given out for completing an achievement call『Sword of the Lion King』. If I'm right, it's a weapon that raises base speed and attack. Thought I don't know if those effects are applied in this world or not……

I'll take this as well, if I left it here it would only gather dust.

I thought so as I took the sword. While I was storing away the gold coins in my bag, the bedrooms seemed to have become lively.

“There’s a thief on the premises!!! A thief ahhhhh!!”

“Someone set them fre- Gyaaa!!”

From the sound of the footsteps guards must be entering the bedroom one after another, and I could hear the sound of metal clashing. The sound of men screaming also echoed behind the occasional explosion.

After a particularly loud explosion the entire castle shock, a「para para」sound could be heard as something collapsed, after which the sounds of something burning could be heard.

The castle must have caught fire.

Then a person entered the room and called out to me with a look of disgust on their face.

“What are you doing?”

Her gray cloak flutters as she folds her arms. Her ample twin hills could be seen from the top of her corset-shaped leather armor, and they were even more pronounced with her arms crossed.

I probably looked like a thief in the middle of filling up his leather bag with gold coins before taking off to her. If I had a green cover over my head the image would be perfect.

I could probably pass for Santa if a fireplace was nearby, but there was a savior lack of fireplaces.

“It cost money to unexpectedly have to rebuild an organization.”

“?”

The two elves showed up once they were finished, and stood behind her with dubious expressions as I spoke.

“If I intended to re-launch a kidnapping organization, it couldn’t be reconstructed without the necessary funds. We can greatly hinder the opposition by taking away a large amount of money and property here.”

While I was only blinded by the gold coins, I was able to come up with a plausible excuse to tell her. What I said shouldn’t necessarily be wrong……

When Ariane glanced back at the two elves, they both nodded as if in agreement and began to fill a leather bag with gold coins. Ariane also started to randomly throw gold coins into a bag.

“Still, carrying such heavy gold coins over our shoulders…… This in more than three time my

weight……that's……"

"Even if you have a good plan, isn't it a serious problem trying to escape with with these heavy things over our shoulders?"

"Um～～, Heavy～"

The three of them looked ridiculous with the big leather bags over their shoulders.

"It's okay, he can use transfer magic. We don't have any more business here, so let's go."

"Uh?! Huh!? Isn't it just a legend that a single person can use transfer magic?!"

"Um～～, A single person would lack the mental discipline and mana～"

While they were in the middle of that exchanged the lower floor became noisy again. We weren't allowed to be leisurely in our escape for this place.

Most of the remaining gold coins had been gathered by the three of them, so there was indeed no more business here.

"【Transfer Gate】!"

The magic circle formed on the floor and started to emit light in the room. In the next moment, the surroundings shifted in an instant and we were transferred downstream from Diento.

"The escape was successful. That transfer magic sure in convenient, I wonder if I could learn it……"

"Eh?!! This is a lie!? That was really transfer magic?!"

"Oh～～, I'm tired～. Where are we?"

The three of them were looking around and even I'm surprised about where we ended up. Everything that was within the magic circle seems to have been transferred along with us.

The artwork and furniture that was around the room a while ago were all sitting on the grass.

The smoke from the fires still rose from Diento, and it seems to have increased. I did remember the sound of fire spreading in the feudal lord's castle……

"So, I take it that all the requirement for the request have been mate?"

Ariane stopped gazing over the river and looked in my direction; she took out five elven gold coins and tossed them at me with a fearless laugh.

"You really saved us this time. Here's your reward as promised. Thought the gold coins we

stole are more valuable……”

I say “Anytime” as I catch the coins with one hand and put them in the leather bag tied to my waist.

“Arc, I’m heading to the closest village『Raratolaia』would you mind meeting the elders?

Lowering the bag of gold coins from her shoulder, Ariane asked me that question with a serious expression.

I personally wanted to see the elf village. However, I would like to be excused from meeting the elders.

“Hmm, I would like to go to the elf village…… Do I have to meet with the elders?”

“That’s expected. In order invite an outsider, I first have to request it from the elders. And to be honest, I would like to continue to use your powers in the future…… I would like to introduce you to one of the elders to gain their trust. Why?”

The two elves beside Ariane were surprised, yet the waited quietly as she made her proposal.

“I cannot take off this armor…… No, you say you want to give me your trust, so I will stop lying——. I don’t want to take off this armor.”

“For a meeting with the elders, you’d have to take it off to show your face…… Is that a problem?”

I answer her question with silence.

“May I hear your reason?”

It’s hard to answer when asked my reason. I personally don’t want to lie to her too much. However she may not understand even if I told her the truth.

“When I take off my helmet, Ariane promise me that you don’t point your sword a me—”

“If I promise not to rise my swords will you show your face?”

Her golden eyes never leave my visage. There it is after the deluge. I can use their reactions to my exposed figure as a guideline for my future actions.

When I move my hand to take off my helmet, Ponta skillfully jumped from my head to my shoulder.

I remove my helmet and faced them.

—— They all had a surprised looked on their faces.

A skeleton in armor stood before their eyes, with the pale flame of the dead flattering in its eye sockets.

The elves on the side immediately took action as a surge of magical power flew out of their bodies.

However, Ariane stood in front of them and grabbed their hands to control them.

“Arc……, You, is that your…… body?”

Though she was surprised she tried to keep it out of her voice, but she still asked in a hesitate tone.

Even if I say that this was the appearance of a game character and that I was throw into this world with it, they would not understand that.

“I don’t know……, I just know I was thrown into this country with this cursed body……

“Isn’t that person an undead?!”

“That undead in the armor is frighteningly strong～!”

The two elves scowl without breaking their stances, and Ariane fixed her eyes on them and spoke to them with a calm expression.

“Look closely. He doesn’t carry the pollution of the dead…… A spirit beast would never take to an undead tainted by the pollution of death. Could an undead use healing magic?”

The two elves were gradually confused by her words.

“T-That? That’s a fluffy fox on his shoulder…… a spirit beast. Oh? What is this??”

“The undead use the cursed power of darkness, it’s impossible to use the purifying power of light magic right～?”

Ariane was the only one laughing at their confusion.

“Arc used his power to help our brethren…… He did not have to reveal his body’s secret. Depending on the type of curse it is, the elders may have some insight on it.”

I’m thankful for that. Anyhow, even though two barely clothed elven women are standing before me, it was saddening as a man that there was no reaction from my crotch.

No, this isn’t a place to crack jokes……

“I’m truly thankful. If the curse on my body can be removed it would be truly wonderful.”

Giving such a response, I put my helmet on again.

I still wonder why I choose a skeleton avatar, but it was too late to regret my past actions now.

“I’ll introduce myself once more. My name is Ariane Glenys Maple. A warrior of the Canadian forest from Maple.”

She held out her right hand while saying so. I grasped it back.

“Arc. I’m travelling to remove this curse from my body.”

When I said it, my future goal had been decided.

It was set within my mind, traveling to break my curse, though it’s likely to be an unachievable feat.

“Then let’s go meet Danka upstream!”

She laughed as she placed one of the bags of gold coins over her shoulder. I picked up some of the heavier bags as well and gaze out at the forest as it connected with the river upstream.

Without day even breaking, under the glow of the moonlight, for the first time my path has been decided.

—— Then shall we sit off?

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**Silver’s Thoughts**

Probably will only do this for the last numbered chapter or epilogue from here on out. Anyway, this was a good starting point for the series in my opinion. The world this novel takes place in was fleshed out little. There was enough progression to make the world build interesting. There are plenty of plot threads open for exploration in later volumes. And the main and potential recurring characters had engaging and unique personalities. The only thing I can nit pick about is Arc’s overall involvement. In all honesty Ariane acted like more of a protagonist for this type of novel then he did. I say that it’s only a nit pick though because it made sense in the overall story. Till he took Ariane’s hand in this chapter, Arc was basically aimless and thanks to his power he was easily able to amass wealth, so him being adrift most of the time is pretty natural as he had no reason to connect with anyone or thing plus the whole deal with his body. This is long enough so I’ll just end it with this, I just wish that I could’ve satisfied my need for mayhem by having Arc be the one that brought the castle down.

# *Epilogue*

In the plans overlooking the Calcutta mountain range, the abundant quantity of the Rydell river was flowing east of the wind dragon mountain range.

The Rhoden kingdom imperial capital stood in such a place. The imperial capital was a four wall layered city that had been build with the imperial palace at the center.

The population was three times the size of the major fort city Diento, easily surpassing 50,000 people.

A massive wheat field expanded outside the city walls, and thanks to the the major highways going in the cardinal directions not only are goods produced in the capital but they flow in from all over the country as well.

Though the Rhoden kingdoms proudly holds the position of the third largest power on the continent, it's not a country ruled solely by one empire like the Leburan empire in the Northern Midwest.

It was a country formed by the gathering of many nobles and feudal lords, with the Olav royal family at the center. Therefore, even though the royals established the policies of the kingdom, they could not recklessly interfere with the territories under heavy control of the feudal lords.

The power of the royal family surpassed any one lord, but it is of no match to all of the lords' combined might.

However, the royal family can intervene with military force if the actions of a feudal lord are a threat to the kingdom. Weather it be an invasion from other countries or a feudal lord rebellion, they are often situations stopped without the aid of the kingdom's other lords.

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In the imperial capital Olav, the assassination of the marquis of Diento was being discussed in the royal court held inside the palace. Many rumors and much speculation was being shared between the nobles present for the case.

In a certain room that belonged to second prince Douglass Shishle Carunon Rhoden Vetoran, two men were having a discussion.

Behind the two people sitting down stood another person. There was no else besides these three, not even servants, within the room.

The person that stood wasn't that tall, but they had a well trained body and pleasing features. Their blue eyes were partially hidden by golden hair, they wore a easy to move in military uniform, and golden decorative pieces that only nobles could have adorned his clothes.

He was  Douglass the Olav royal family's second prince.

"Fuck! The largest source of our factions income has been destroyed!"

Prince Douglass's regular features were twisted as he spit out those words.

The large man sitting down gravely nods in agreement.

The man's hair was a blend of grey and brown and he sported a respectable beard, but one could not sense any old age from him only masculinity.

This elderly man was one of the seven dukes of the country, the head of the Olsterio family and major general of the unified national army, Duke Marudoira De Olsterio.

The dukes are the highest ranking nobles in the country that supported the royal family, but they don't possess their own territory, so they take out a salary from the tax of the domestic lords and from the king's territory. On the other hand, they were at the center of power as they carried out important tasks for the kingdom.

"On this matter, the eldest son of marquis Diento who'd been staying in the capital, Hebron, has been attributed the territory by his majesty. With the assassination of the former head and the second son having disappeared, It may take a considerable amount of time for Hebron to settle things down even with his ability……"

Major general Marudoira spoke on the matter with a bitter look on his face.

"According to the witness testimony elves were present……, This affair, could it be their retaliation?"

To be honest I don't understand. The day that elves were claim to being present, three slave dealerships were hit with a surprise attack. More than twenty beast men escaped, and people say it was the work of the 'Emancipators'."

"The 'Emancipators'  one purpose is to free beastmen slaves correct? The members should all be beastmen……, did they partner with the elves?"

"It is also certain that…… This could be a deception so that it looked as such. In order to strengthen the crown princess's faction, by presenting the crime of capturing the elves in Diento in front of the king. Her highness Juliana has aggressively been appealing for harmony with the elves, if our actions are revealed to his majesty then they can be seen as acts of treason, and his highness's power would be crippled. The order to silence the servants that witnessed the event has been given, but the whereabouts of one of them is already unknown. It's possible that they are already being sheltered by one of the other factions…… The funds that were to be sent from Diento have disappeared as well, and elves normally show little interest in such valuable things. It should not have been an amount that the number of elves reported could have been able to take anyway……"

Prince Douglass grimaced at those words.

If these matters became public, then it's possible a large gap could form between him and prince Sect and princess Juliana in the race for the throne.

No, three of the dukes have already joined prince Sect faction, and he has the support of western Leburan empire as well.

It was evident that the throne was greatly inclined towards the Sect faction.

As Major general Marudoira had said, Douglass could only see this event as someone's stratagem against him.

For better or worse Juliana tends to be honest, so it was unlikely that she would steal money under the guise of an elf surprise attack.

However, his older half-brother prince Sect was the type of person that could step on someone's foot with a straight face.

"We have to act before Sect makes a move. Setorion, gather some useful pieces for Hoben."

"As you command."

The man in his 30s that was in a military uniform similar to Marudoira's who'd had been silent till now, lowered his head respectfully upon receiving Douglass's instructions.

He was the eldest son of Duke Olsterio and one of the country's three generals, Setorion De Olsterio.

As expected of parent and child, his features were that of a young Marudoira.

In the eyes of prince Douglass, the flames of dark hatred arose as he thought of his brother's figure, after he nodded at Setorion's response.

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At the same time, three people were gathered in the private room of Rhoden's first prince Sect Rondaro Carunon Rhoden.

In an engraved amber colored chair with a first class cushion embroiled with a flower pattern, a nobleman was deeply sitting back in it.

He was the master of this room prince Sect. He had a tall figure, light brown hair, and was adorned in luxurious clothes made specifically for him.

Next to prince Sect was a beautiful women with long brown hair neatly tied up and features similar to Sect's, thought she gave off a different impression thanks to the thick amount of makeup applied to her face. Her body was wrapped in a luxurious dress that had an emphasized wide skirt .

This was Prince Sect's Mother, Letitia Rhoden Sadi the second queen.

"This affair seems to have caused his highness Douglass to move, Rondaru aren't you going to act?"

The second queen Letitia, questioned her son Sect using his childhood name.

Only extremely close friends and relatives can address the members of the royal family by their childhood names, if someone else were to does so then it would be less majestic.

"Mother, Douglass is now carrying out clean up. Though they seem to want to cover it up, it's obvious that a great deal of funds have been lost along with marquis Diento. That person is just stalling for time. It don't matter if they're left alone."

At prince Sect's words, the other person within the room that had been silent till now nodded before he began to speak.

"With all due respect, the only one aggressively moving now is princess Juliana. When the princess makes this latest matter know, then your highness Sect's position will be in danger as well……"

Only a snobbish atmosphere came from the man dressed as a clergyman and had a fake smile plastered on his face. This little man was a bishop of the religious Hiruku county and was staying in the capital on the grounds of conducting missionary work.

"…… Well, Juliana is popular with the citizens of the capital. Using this breakthrough as a foothold, the dukes that have been calmly watching from the sideline may be inclined to join the other side…… There movements need to be investigated before hand……, Borane. Have those talented in magic been gathered?"

"! Everything is prepared! By the will of our great god, I bless you your highness. It brings or believers great joy in taking part in the princess's demise, prince Sect."

The small man called Borane over exaggerated his joy on the matter.

While it was forbidden to laugh a princess, Borane didn't receive any repercussions from prince Sect.

"Borane, you and I have a good relationship. There's no need to be so formal, you're allowed to call me Rondaru in private."

After a moment Bishop Borane's lips twisted, as he politely expressed his gratitude.

"My sincerest gratitude for bestowing such an honor to me prince Rondaru. There are preparations to make in order to clear away your highness's fears, so I'll take my leave here."

Although his feelings of joy clearly overflowed from his body as he bowed and left, the

second queen let out a sigh once she saw Borane was gone.

“Was it alright to say such a thing Rondaru? Won’t things become annoying after princess Juliana is eliminated?”

“It doesn’t matter. That person flying between me and Douglass only goal is to see the elimination of princess Juliana. Juliana is the ringleader of those that are advising father not to allow the perpetration of Hiruku’s religion. After I help with Juliana’s removal her connections and private soldiers with disappear as well. This country’s current temple based religion’s power is not that great, embracing Hiruku’s religion will ignite a new source of strength within it. ”

“I see. Having the temple devotees chased out of the country by the newly admitted Hiruku religion will increase the population as their followers will flow in behind them. It’s rumored that the emperor of the Lebrun alienating the Hiruku pope, aren’t you receiving their backing?”

“That’s right. Giving the cold shoulder to the western Leburan empire is a bad Idea as they control the southern topic ports, so it’s a bad move to be connected with a neglected religious country. First let’s investigate Juliana’s movements…… I’ll exploit this matter as an opportunity to remove Douglass, then remove the leaders of Diento and make it into my own territory.”

Sect laughed ironically as he said that, then gulped down the now cooled tea, before calling a subordinate forward and arranging future preparations.

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While the removal of princess Juliana was underway, the very person was sitting inside another room of the palace, looking out over the courtyard and drinking tea.

Despite her calm atmosphere, if one looked at her dress they’d find that the clothed used was flawlessly embroidered, and that the person herself carried great enthusiasm in her eyes. **//Not to sure on this one//** She was the second princess of the county Juliana Marill Melissa Rhoden Olav.

She played with a loose lock of her long blonde hair, and with a displeased look that didn’t match her lovely brown eyes, she turned to the man sitting besides her.

“I almost thought I caught older brother Douglass by the tail. Although there is a secret investigation into the lord Diento, for him to be assassinated……, is it possible that Douglass caught wind of it and did this to destroy evidence?”

The man princess Juliana asked was in the prime of his life as he sat in a chair with good posture and wearing a general’s military uniform.

He was one of the Rhoden’s three generals, Carton De Furivutoran and he hesitated a little

at the princess's question.

"No princess. Not only was he one of prince Douglass's factions major funders, he was an influential supporter, so subjugating marquis Diento wouldn't have been a wise decision. As for the witnesses, even though we acted immediately, we were only able to secure one person who's now in our protection. We promptly sent the witness to the Rinburoto arch dukedom……"

At his words princess Juliana's eyebrows rose up as she made a difficult expression.

"According to the report, it was elves that attacked the castle, could it've been retribution for the elf kidnappings? However, the slave dealers downtown were also attacked and the beastmen were freed as well……, have they allied with each other? Diento was said to be a solid fort, was a successful raid really carried out with only a few elven warriors?"

The princess was staring at the cup on the table as steam rose from it, and it was clear that she was thinking to herself rather than expecting a actual response.

"The relationship between the the elves and the beastmen isn't especially inharmonious, that in it of itself is enough for the story to be possible……, but it's still should have been rather difficult to infiltrate without a guild. Mysteriously the amassed funds were all taken and the castle was partially destroyed by the fire, yet only a few elves were reported to have been seen……, so it's possible that looters came after the fire was put out."

"In any case, the people in possession of elves will probably be fearful because of this incident. It was an unceremonious retaliation against a solid fortress. In this situation, proper trade with the elves of the large forest has become farther away…… Stupid brother, you've done something completely unnecessary! You're going to waste the 400 year treaty before it expires!"

She complained about her older half brother with a big sigh.

"However, Prince Douglass's faction's power has been greatly diminished by this affair. The nobles drifting here will increase. We have to watch the actions of his highness Sect in the near future."

"Well, older brother Sect may take this opportunity to joyously split apart bother Douglass's faction. It's probably better to properly speak with the elves regarding this situation…… We only have decent trade through the Rinburuto arch dukedom, so we'd need a way to form a direct connection with them."

After a large shoulder shrug, she picked up the cup of herbal tea and brought it to her lips. The fragrance of the tea tickled the princess's nose, as she made a pleasant expression while enjoying the tea break.

Her older sister Serena married Tashkent the archduke of Rinburuto.

"I wonder if onee-sama is doing well……"

She said so with a sigh before glancing out the window again.

Thick grey clouds hung in the sky above the capital as rain rapidly started to fall.

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Silver's Thoughts:

Well, I know the one that we are suppose to root for is Juliane, but in my opinion all of this guy would make terrible rulers. Sect is a snake in the glass with an apparent sadist strike, and it's setup like his the kind of guy that loses his shit and falls apart whenever his plans fail. Douglass is short sighted and seems to have a hair trigger temper, which may explain why his faction has less resources than the others and why most of his capital came from Diento. And Juliane appears unsuited to handle some of the darker jobs that a leader sometime have to do for the great good of their people. Sad thing is that if you mix the foresight, passions, and compassion of three you might get a great ruler.

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